

CRIME PREVENTION AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT



SELF-SELECTION POLICING

Theory, Research and Practice

JASON ROACH
AND KEN PEASE



Crime Prevention and Security Management

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Jason Roach • Ken Pease

Self-Selection Policing

Theory, Research and Practice

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*For Ken, from all who have sailed with him. Except for me as I've been
carrying him for years. JR.*

Series Editor's Preface

This book is not just about exploring the potential of a new approach to investigating offences, it is also about encouraging a new way of thinking about crime and the consequences of offending. Jason Roach and Ken Pease introduce the concept of 'Self-Selection Policing' (SSP), the process by which some serious offenders self-select themselves for police attention because of the more minor offences they also commit. The premise of SSP is on the face of it a very simple one, as is often the case with new innovations in thinking (just think of repeat victimization, for example, which the second author is so closely associated with). It posits that opportunities to identify and apprehend serious offenders is undermined by a lack of attention to their less serious offences which are also commonly a part of their lifestyle. So by showing that serious offenders also commit less serious crimes, that they are versatile and generalist rather than specialist, they refocus attention away from more traditional approaches which link a person to an event, and instead focus attention on linking events to events. Moreover, it draws attention to people who have already justified the attention of the police.

The book is not presented as a 'how to' book on SSP, although readers are introduced to a range of ideas on improving the process of investigating or, more generally, tackling serious crime. Rather the authors set about presenting a theory and practice approach, or perhaps more specifically a new approach to practice, drawing from an evidence base

promoted by a range of theories including environmental criminology, criminal careers, rational choice and routine activity theory. In addition to the why of SSP they also consider the how and importantly consider the implications in terms of both logistics and ethics in implementing their approach.

They don't shy away from assessing the barriers and hurdles to the wider adoption of SSP. Looking retrospectively their focus is drawn to: common perceptions of offending patterns (and not least what they argue is the overestimation of offence homogeneity); police policy and practice (and the ways offences are screened thereby de-prioritizing minor offences), and the lack of a dedicated research programme (specifically in recognizing the importance of minor offences to identify serious offenders, what they call the 'major-minor link', and the ways minor offences can flag serious offending). The book ends with the authors' own ten commandments which are an engaging read.

Roach and Pease set the context for their work when they argue that 'to us this book is very much a beginning and not an end, a work in progress in need of fresh input from others'. They have then set the challenge and one they and I hope other researchers will embrace. If they are right SSP has the potential to have a significant influence on practice and as a consequence reduce the chances of some people being victimized by serious offenders.

April 2016

Martin Gill

Acknowledgements

Over the ten years or so that we have been thinking about SSP, many people have helped us. Some we do not mention individually by name, primarily because too much time has passed and we are forgetful ingrates. If you helped and we did not give you a name check, contact us and we will remember and apologize. Of course most of the help will have come without either helper or helpee realizing it. So thanks to all those who let us listen to them and to share ideas with.

Some of our helpers have self-selected (you see what we did there!) so conspicuously as to deserve overt thanks. Warm thanks to Michael Barton (Chief Constable of Durham) who has been one of our keenest supporters (mind you he supports other losers such as Blackpool Football Club) and has taken our ideas and made some of them happen. Along with Mike, we also thank all the staff at Durham and Lancashire police, whom Mike often nudged into helping us. Chief Constable Simon Byrne and Chief Inspector Brian Roberts of Cheshire Police provided an affiliation and a sounding board throughout the work. Chief Superintendent Alex Murray of West Midlands Police (and the Society of Evidence-Based Policing) and our friend Rich Harris (also of West Midlands) helped us more recently by allowing us to test empirically some SSP ideas on their patch. Without the help of these 'thinking out of the box' police officers, we would never have been able to test SSP as a viable addition to the police cognitive armoury. Alex even proofread the whole manuscript.

There are also many academic colleagues whom we must thank for their help and encouragement over the last ten years, but again we only have space to mention a few by name. Kate Bowers, Paul Ekblom, Gloria Laycock, Nick Ross, Max Taylor and Richard Wortley warrant our gratitude for their friendship and rigour. JR would also like to thank Alan Shepherd for his continued help with data collection and entry—thanks Al. Camilla and Tommy Luff were inventive and patient in designing the cover (and some of the figures). How the thin image on the cover manages to convey the central idea of SSP is a source of wonder to us.

Dominic and Jules at Palgrave spent much time and showed saintly patience—we know that we push our luck. We are always late with delivery (and we have a lot of form on that score) but we do get there (at least somewhere) eventually.

Last, we would like to thank our families. JR would like especially to thank Clare, Matthew, Maddie and Heidi for putting up with Daddy and his strange job.

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1

Introduction

In 1998, Angela Woodruff, a lawyer living in Hyde, a town close to Manchester, England, became concerned when a colleague contacted her. He had doubts about the authenticity of the last will and testament of Woodruff's recently deceased mother, Kathleen Grundy. Woodruff and her children had been excluded from the will. The local General Medical Practitioner (GP) who had attended Mrs Grundy, had been left everything (some £386,000). Confident that her mother would never have signed such a will, Angela Woodruff reported the matter to the police, who began an investigation into the surprise beneficiary.

This was not the first time police attention had been drawn to the GP beneficiary. In March 1998, Dr Linda Reynolds, a fellow GP in Hyde, prompted by a local funeral director, had expressed her concerns to the local coroner about the high death rate amongst the patients of the GP beneficiary. Of most concern had been the large number of cremation forms for elderly women that the GP had needed to be countersigned by Dr. Reynolds,¹ which seemed excessive

¹ It is normally only necessary for just one doctor to sign a death certificate to verify and record the death of a patient. It is likely that as this GP both practised alone and had been issuing a larger number than was considered to be normal and had given permission for a large number of

given the demography of the local population and her own experience as a GP serving the same community. The police found insufficient evidence to bring charges, although a later inquiry criticized police handling of the matter, by assigning an inexperienced officer to the original inquiry.² The unfortunate officer lacked expertise in determining which deaths were suspicious and how to determine expected death rates. He had no doubt been influenced by the commonly held perception that ‘Doctors do not intentionally kill their patients’. Indeed, a colleague of the writers whose family had been patients of the GP under scrutiny had nothing but praise for his competence and willingness to make home visits. This seems to have been the consensus in the town.

Kathleen Grundy had been found dead at her home on 24 June 1998. Her GP had been the last person to see her alive. He signed her death certificate, recording “old age” as the cause of death. When her body was exhumed, it was found to contain significant traces of diamorphine, a drug often used to control pain in terminal cancer patients. To her daughter’s knowledge, Kathleen Grundy had not been suffering from cancer. Her GP was arrested on 7 September 1998. He was found to own a typewriter of the kind used to write what was now considered to be a forged will.³

On 31 January 2000, a jury found the Hyde GP, Dr Harold Frederick Shipman, guilty on 15 counts of murder. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. The sentencing judge recommended that he never be released. Shipman is now believed to have killed in excess of 250 people between 1975 and 1998, making him Britain’s most prolific murderer. He hanged himself in prison in 2004.

It is highly likely that the police would have eventually identified Shipman as the prolific killer he was, yet there can be no doubt that the commission of the lesser offence of fraud hastened the detection process. It is probable that Shipman killed three of his patients in the period between the original investigation in early 1998 and the investigation of Kathleen Grundy’s will in September 1998.

cremations, he believed that he needed another GP to countersign the deaths in order to avoid suspicion.

² The Shipman Inquiry was chaired by Dame Janet Smith. Her report can be found at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090808154959/http://www.the-shipman-inquiry.org.uk/reports.asp> (accessed 2 June 2015).

³ The forging of a will by making a false instrument contravenes S1 of the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981. See http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/sentencing_manual/making_a_false_instrument/ (accessed on 2 June 2015).

The task of the detective can be reduced to one of selecting those people who had a *prima facie* case to answer from the general population. In order to succeed, the investigator must answer two fundamental questions: (i) *What happened?* (i.e. was there a crime committed?) and if so (ii) *Who committed it?* (Milne and Bull 2006; Stelfox 2008). If we take the example of homicide,⁴ most cases are solved quickly and with relative ease as the killer is often an immediate relative of the victim, such as an intimate (or formerly intimate) partner (Brookman 2005), or is readily identified by a reliable witness. Only about 10 % of homicides have any real claim to being ‘whodunnits’, despite their over-representation in many a popular crime/detective novel or police drama media representation. Most homicides thus do not require extraordinary sleuthing to crack the case. For less serious and less dramatic crimes, such as drug possession and public indecency, detection follows almost automatically from the discovery of the offence (Stelfox 2008).

This is not in any sense meant to belittle the task faced by criminal investigators. A case still needs to be built. Although there is still a danger that investigators will jump to building a case against a suspect prematurely by favouring evidence against him, rather than seeking evidence which would establish innocence (Stelfox and Pease 2005). Nevertheless, the fact that the likely offender is commonly identified early in the investigative process, makes the overall task of identifying the right man (as it usually is) considerably easier than where there are no immediate suspects at all.

In those cases where detection of a crime is not swift and relatively easy, most police officers would agree that the identification of offenders relies primarily upon information provided by the public in the form of witness accounts (Kebbell and Milne 1998; Stelfox 2009). Where investigators have little or no forensic evidence to guide them, the primary source of information is usually that provided by victims and other witnesses (Milne and Bull 2006).

Failing these swift routes to detection, the investigative net is widened by reverting to the targeting of those already known (commonly referred to as the ‘usual suspects’) and the obtaining of accurate intelligence about

⁴In England and Wales, ‘homicide’ is the collective known for murder, manslaughter and infanticide.

offending patterns that can be matched to the facts of an individual case (Townnsley and Pease 2003). Thereby, for example, the modus operandi of known individuals matches a specific crime being investigated (e.g. the use of a suction-cup to cut a hole in a basement window), or where the geographic and temporal aspects of a crime (e.g. Rossmo 2009) match others committed previously (e.g. Ratcliffe 2008). Detection however, is often abandoned in all but the most serious cases, where a crime's 'solvability criteria' are not met. The implications of this for self-selection policing are explored in Chap. 7.

The conventional approaches to offender detection are not contested here. There is, however, a case to be made that serious criminals can elude justice because more minor offending, which is a part of their lifestyle, is not investigated rigorously. The most serious offenders are often apprehended because they are detected committing lesser offences. Something has led an alert police officer to ask questions and make checks which reveal the bigger picture. Famous examples include the detections of the serial murderers Peter Sutcliffe (aka the Yorkshire Ripper) because he drove a car displaying false number (registration) plates, and David 'Son of Sam' Berkowitz, identified because he parked illegally next to a fire hydrant.

1 About This Book

The danger of riding two horses is that you are more likely to end up on your backside. There is a danger that we are trying to do this in appealing to both students and operational police officers (and those busy people, increasingly numerous, with a foot in both camps). We have structured each chapter as a series of sections which allow the time-strapped reader to choose whether to concentrate on theory and research or skip to what we see as the practical implications. We do hope of course that our time-strapped reader will return to complete the book when time is less pressing (or when they are mounting their own self-selection policing initiative).

Over the past ten years we have produced a number of research papers and written and run a number of courses for different audiences (including police officers) which have sought to show how active, serious offenders

might be identified using non-traditional investigative means. This was not simply to increase probability of conviction, but to change perceptions of the consequences of offending across a wide range of offence types. The approach we advocate in this book seeks to apply similar principles of context-tweaking in respect of those settings with which chronic offenders are uniquely familiar, namely the settings in which they have been wont to commit crime. Some of these involve the commission of minor rather than major crimes. Minor crime and rule-breaking will always (think about it) be more frequent in the chronic offender's life than serious offending.

This book's focus is on an emergent complement to traditional detection methods. We label it 'Self-Selection Policing' (SSP) an approach whereby active, serious criminals are identified by the investigation of the minor often 'routine' offences that they commit. A more systematic analysis and scrutiny of specific minor infractions of the law can point up 'trigger crimes' which merit attention in their own right, but also crucially direct attention towards those engaged in more serious concurrent criminality. 'Self-selection' is the appropriate term by virtue of the fact that if serious criminals tend to commit minor offences more frequently than they do serious ones, or do so in ways which are more transparent and easier to detect, then an increased scrutiny of such minor offences is likely to yield dividends in exposing them as active serious offenders. This book represents our research and speculation on the utility of SSP over the last ten years, and will doubtless command our continuing, often reluctant, attention in the same way a loose tooth attracts the tongue.

2 The Structure of the Book

This book is short. Although our other books are short, this one is intentionally so for one main reason. It has always been our intention for this book to represent merely a beginning. In one of Churchill's more famous speeches, as the tide of World War II turned, he opined "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end, but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning".⁵ In its infinitely humbler way, we see this book as

⁵ <http://www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/EndoBegn.html> (accessed 7 March 2016).

the end of the beginning, offered in the hope of stimulating the reader's interest and imagination to thinking more about it and how it might be used in practice. We hope that others will take the idea to places we cannot envisage. We are offering our child up for adoption (but hope for visiting rights to be granted us!).

SSP is based upon the simple premise that 'those who do big bad things also do little bad things' (Roach 2007a) and that by playing on and manipulating perceptions of minor offending, crime may be reduced in the same way as for situational crime prevention generally. That this is achieved alongside the increased probability of detection for more serious offences is not a problem. Increased official attention should not only uncover more active, serious crime, but is more justifiable than targeting the usual suspects by modus operandi, previous types of conviction, or by covert intelligence, because the individual *has committed* an offence, however minor, in the first instance.

For the SSP approach to be taken seriously the following must be addressed:

- *Why should it work?* (i.e. what theoretical support is there in the criminological and psychological literature?)
- *How might it work?* (i.e. what supporting SSP research is there?)
- *specific minor offences are expected to work best? Which* (i.e. supporting case study research)
- *What are the psychological, practical, logistical, ethical and institutional barriers to implementing the SSP approach?*

Structured around these four questions, this book takes each in turn and provides a pragmatic and (hopefully) balanced assessment of not only for the viability of the SSP approach but also where criticism, reluctance and reticence might be levelled.

The underpinning theoretical support is first established, before the emergent research support for the SSP approach is introduced by detailed reference to several pilot research studies. The final chapter lays out our

'ten commandments' for SSP, and suggests ways of dealing with anticipated barriers and hurdles to its wider adoption and implementation.

3 The Chapters

This book comprises the following chapters

3.1 Chapter 2: Identifying Suspects

The ways that police currently identify criminals, particularly in the investigation of serious crimes, are explored. Traditional methods such as targeting the 'usual suspects' are introduced and critically appraised, as are less routine methods like offender profiling. Although extant investigative methods continue to produce regular results, they do not always do so, leaving plenty of scope for a complementary approach to identifying active, serious offenders.

3.2 Chapter 3: Are Serious Criminals Really Offence Versatile?

A research and theoretical case is presented for viewing offenders (particularly those who commit crimes deemed to be serious) as crime versatile (i.e. offence heterogeneous) as opposed to extreme crime specialists (i.e. offence homogenous). The research literature concerning criminal careers is presented. This shows overwhelmingly that those who commit crime rarely stick to one type (e.g. burglary), instead they will commit a wider range of offences. Theoretical alongside empirical support for this view is presented, including opportunity based theories such as Rational Choice Theory and Routine Activities Theory, along with developmental perspectives such as Terrie Moffitt's taxonomy (Moffitt 2003). This chapter provides an underpinning for SSP.

3.3 Chapter 4: Self-Selection Policing and Serious Offenders

Support for the versatile offender is continued by first presenting some famous examples of notorious serial murderers that were uncovered by their commission of a minor offence, before presenting fledgling SSP research conducted to date (although not always badged as such).

3.4 Chapter 5: Going Fishing: Searching for Self-Selection Trigger Offences Committed by Visitors to a Prison

This presents an individual empirical case study demonstrating the utility of SSP. It provides an account of the ‘Operation Visitor’ study whereby a sample of prison visitors were subject to police scrutiny and the minor offences they committed identified and cross-tabulated with their wider offence histories (Roach 2007a).

3.5 Chapter 6: Driving Offences as Self-Selection Policing Triggers

In this chapter the suitability of several driving-related offences as SSP triggers for more active, serious criminality is explored. First, a dedicated study of non-compliance with the Home Office Road Transport 1 requirement is presented, the findings of which strongly suggest that a police focus on non-compliance should uncover serious criminals, before moving to a study of the more serious offence of ‘driving whilst disqualified’, which the preliminary findings suggest to be an offence committed most by those ingrained in criminal careers.

3.6 Chapter 7: A Long and Winding Road? Barriers to Adopting Self-Selection Policing

Here, the case for adopting the SSP approach is summarized, with anticipated barriers to its adoption, including police policy and practice, discussed. Suggestions are made about how best to conceptualize the SSP approach and how new ideas for trigger offences might be tested.

4 Additional Material

The reader will find ‘think about it’ boxes in some of the chapters, which have been developed to encourage thinking about a particular topic or issue that we deem pertinent to understanding and challenging the SSP approach. Although we completely understand that not all readers will have time to read all the chapters of the book, and may indeed dip in and out over time, we do urge that if the ‘think’ boxes are left for a rainy day, that at some point that rainy day comes. For those looking to use this book as a teaching or training resource, we hope that the ‘think’ boxes are suitable starting points for discussion in lectures and seminars.

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2

Identifying Suspects

1 Introduction

The chapter title is easily comprehensible and will not occasion surprise. We think it should. Under SSP, the title would be something like 'Identifying Flag Offences'. Choosing a *person* as the starting point of an investigation has all kinds of drawbacks, such as the ever-present danger of actual or claimed harassment. Think of the controversy which surrounds the use of police powers to stop and search someone. By exercising that power, a police officer is implicitly saying something about the person to be searched. If an *event* rather than a person is the trigger, the problems are much reduced. If, for example, a person has defaulted on the payment of a fine, the person has selected him or herself for legitimate police attention. Under circumstances which we will elaborate in the following chapters, using minor offences rather than who the perpetrators are can be regarded as transgressors *volunteering* for police attention. The fine defaulter above has less reason to feel aggrieved than the person searched.

How do the police currently identify active serious offenders? They are primarily singled out by a focus on the person rather than the event. People thought to be active criminals may find themselves targeted for attention. For example, police officers on patrol may receive BOLO (be on the lookout) instructions from dispatchers. Those targeted may receive Christmas cards from the police which temper seasonal goodwill with messages to behave. They may have their photograph exhibited in rooms where briefings take place as one of this week's top ten active offenders. There is a case for supplementing these extant (often traditional) methods by adopting the SSP perspective. The key and fundamental difference between SSP and the traditional approach is that in the traditional approach outlined below, the investigation seeks to link a person to an event. In SSP the attempt is to link events to events, the events having the perpetrator in common.

Before we embark on a blatant attempt to win the reader round to our way of thinking so early in the book, presenting sensational case examples involving serial killers and SSP, we begin by setting an appropriate policing context within which SSP can be situated and which the adoption of SSP would change. The aim is to outline current methods by which serious offenders are currently identified by police.

2 Identifying Serious Offenders by Current Police Methods

The popular perception of how police investigate serious crime depicts detectives as performing a 'Sherlock Holmes' role. First and typically, a member of the public reports a crime. Second, detectives examine the scene for clues, interview victims and witnesses and make other inquiries. Third, a suspect is identified and confronted with the evidence (Maguire 2003, 2008). This somewhat stereotypical public view of how cases are solved, Maguire, suggests enshrines a number of important assumptions about the nature of criminal investigations:

- that it is reactive (i.e. police respond to a crime complaint from the public rather than generate the investigation themselves)
- that it is focused on an offence which has already taken place
- that the offence which is being investigated is clear from the outset

- that the inquiries are geared to uncovering the ‘truth’ about what happened
- that it is carried out by CID (Criminal Investigation Department) officers
- that the main investigative skills lie in discovering and interpreting ‘clues’ to find out ‘who did it’ (Maguire 2003, p. 367, 2008, p. 434).

Although these assumptions may be well-founded where the offender is readily identifiable (e.g. from victim and witness statements), for those offences of a serious nature perpetrated by strangers to the victim, sometimes referred to as ‘stickers’ or ‘whodunits’ (Innes 2003, 2007), they appear less so. These cases often require lengthy criminal investigation as such, as opposed to building cases against readily identified suspects (Stelfox and Pease 2005).

In the absence of any immediate potential suspects amongst the victim’s family, colleagues friends and enemies, police will instigate what has been referred to as a ‘bureaucratic mode of suspicion’ (Matza 1969) through which they “will look at the characteristics of the crime and match them to known local active offenders” (Innes 2007, p. 263). They will routinely target those known offenders often crudely referred to as ‘the usual suspects’ (Maguire 2003; Newburn 2007).

2.1 The Usual Suspects: A Traditional Approach to Identifying Serious Offenders

Police have identified serious offenders primarily on the basis of information supplied by the public or by targeting ‘known’ offenders. Many police stations will feature photo galleries of ‘this week’s top ten’ people believed to be active in the commission of local crime.

The method of criminal investigation, dubbed ‘traditional’ in the literature, is a suspect-centred approach (McConville et al. 1991) whereby a case is constructed against ‘known offenders’—principally individuals who have “built up a set of previous convictions and have been well known to the local police” (Maguire 2008, p. 435). It is common, for example, in the case of sex offences, for a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) to scrutinize the movements of known sex offenders in the local

area and for burglars with a particular modus operandi (Innes 2007). Indeed, fictional police procedures in books and television shows often serve to reinforce this perception of detective 'work' in depicting scenes where known 'villains' are 'felt up' by police eager to solve recent crimes, often without any evidence to link them to the specific offences in question. Police have detained and interviewed known offenders, in the hope that they will either unwittingly incriminate themselves or provide information about the 'real' offenders. This often works. Often it does not.

All thinking police officers will acknowledge that this approach can never be more than partially successful. People move in and out of active criminality all the time. Cybercrime makes locality largely irrelevant and requires a whole new set of investigative tools. There is, as will be described later, an excessively narrow view about the level of specialism exhibited in offending careers. Over-enthusiastic targeting of this week's top ten can tip over into harassment. It presents the ever-present danger of confirmation bias, in which evidence pointing towards guilt is sought, and evidence pointing towards innocence is neglected (Rossmo 2009). The approach requires an unrealistically extensive and accurate knowledge of offenders and their offending patterns, else it risks degenerating into either a complete waste of time or even worse into miscarriages of justice. Townsley and Pease (2002, p. 325) suggest that such practice whereby police officers nominate prolific offenders is likely to be inaccurate for four basic reasons:

- those offenders selected for targeting are not the prolific ones
- those offenders not selected for targeting are the prolific ones
- offenders' rates of offending vary across time
- rates of co-offending are high, so that the imprisonment of one of three people who offend together will have little effect in so far as his co-offenders continue in his absence.

In a corresponding study they found in a selected sample area that there was little evidence to suggest that a group of police-nominated individuals contributed significantly to the level of crime in that area (calculated by comparing the number of crimes occurring while those nominated were at liberty with the number of crimes in an area when they were incarcerated).

Put another way, there was no evidence to suggest that those nominated were indeed prolific offenders (or at least not on that patch), questioning therefore the logic of relying solely on a local targeting approach to prolific offender identification. Besides, if targeting known offenders is the sole approach taken then two problems arise: first, only those known would be targeted leaving those who have not yet come to police attention ‘untargeted’; second, many of those targeted might have desisted from crime raising some problematic human rights implications for forces, what Matza (1969) has referred to as ‘policing by suspicion’. A point summed up well by Chenery, Henshaw and Pease, and one to which we shall return.

Such human rights violations can be indefensible if directed at those who are not current offenders and undesirable when it spills over to relatives of current offenders. (1999, p. 1)

Townsend and Pease (2002) assert, no doubt self-evidently, that becoming a police target is not a matter to be taken lightly and that as such, it must be done fairly, sparingly, and consistent with crime reduction aims and the preservation of human rights. Arguably the importance of the last point makes alternative offender targeting methods correspondingly more attractive. This is a point we shall return to very shortly.

The traditional suspect-centred approach moves therefore from suspect identification to building a case against a prime suspect, often at lightning speed, carrying the inherent danger of moving too quickly before a list of all possible suspects has been investigatively exhausted sufficiently (e.g. Stelfox and Pease 2005; Rossmo 2009). More broadly, the notion of case construction against suspects has called into question whether an “objective search for the truth” (Maguire 2008, p. 435) has been replaced by the pursuit of organizational aims (e.g. detection ‘clear up rates’) and the culture of police work (McConville et al. 1991).

The targeting of ‘usual suspects’, as discussed here, has some things going for it. Over the past 25 years, some research has supported this practice, for example, with the seemingly universal finding that around 20 % of offenders are responsible for 80 % of crime (e.g. see Blumstein et al. 1986). Such evidence has led the UK Home Office over the last 20 years to instruct police and their local partners (established under

the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) to focus on those whom they called 'prolific or priority offenders' (POPOs). In effect this is an endorsement of the practice of focusing on the usual suspects and shaking the 'known offender-tree' often pays dividends, especially if conducted within a contemporary crime analysis and intelligence-led approach (e.g. Ratcliffe 2008). However, as discussed a little earlier, the degree to which police exhibit knowledge of local crime patterns and serious and prolific offenders has been disputed (e.g. Townsley and Pease 2002) and therefore its real efficacy. Although traditional methods of rounding up the usual suspects can (and does) often lead to known suspects being appropriately identified for specific crimes, it should not be used solely, nor lightly, since it is far from an exact science and for many is an affront to individual human rights.

The SSP approach is different in that it is by the action of committing a minor offence that the attention of police is awakened, and not from a suspicion based on either knowledge of previous offending or by a police 'hunch',

The advantage of this approach is that because individuals volunteer for police attention, officers do not waste time on innocent people, there is no basis for allegations of harassment and more people come in contact with the police who are already subject to police powers. (Townsley and Pease 2003, p. 207)

Allegations of harassment are therefore minimized by virtue of the fact that the individual has selected his (or herself) by having committed a minor offence. SSP therefore is a much more subtle way of identifying offenders, but the important distinction must be made between minor offences being used to self-select and lesser charges made against serious offenders because of lack of evidence.

The reader may at this point have been put in mind of police sting operations, whereby tempting crime opportunities are engineered by the police. When such opportunities are taken by offenders, the 'sting' occurs. For example, 'bait cars' are equipped with closed-circuit television (CCTV) and the capacity to lock the intending thief inside. While the sting is, like SSP, event triggered rather than person triggered, it is a

police-precipitated rather than a spontaneous event and hence liable to criticisms of entrapment.

Just as SSP must be differentiated from sting operations, so it must also be distinguished from opportunist charging. In SSP an offender-chosen event is selected as a route to the detection of something more serious. The gangster, Al Capone, for example, did not self-select for police attention by failing to pay his taxes. The police (and indeed all of Chicago and most of the United States) were well aware who he was and of the horrible violence in which he was involved; it was just that tax evasion was all he could be charged with by the Internal Revenue Service. This is not therefore an example of SSP, but an example of desperate enforcement and getting a result however disproportionate to the seriousness of the crimes committed it might be.

A brief exploration of wider criminal investigative practice beyond the usual suspects approach is now presented for the dual purpose of reviewing how in practice UK police identify active serious offenders and ascertaining how and where SSP might complement extant methods.

2.2 Moving Beyond the Usual Suspects: Specialist Squads and Intelligence-Led Policing

Historically in policing, specialist squads have been formed to tackle specific types of crime such as street robbery, drug dealing and people trafficking. This is more than probably due to a belief that certain offenders (e.g. bank robbers and sex offenders) and certain forms of crime (e.g. prostitution and robbery) require special measures rather than mainstream policing responses, those crime types being less visible and more 'organized' (Maguire 2008). Specialist squads are generally tasked with identifying and targeting key groups (and individuals) involved in the more serious types of crime in question. As such, these specialist squads appear designed to 'do what it says on the tin' and investigate known offenders according to a specific crime type rather than as versatile offenders. If the case for offence versatility is made (hopefully successfully) in this chapter (i.e. that serious offenders and career criminals are heterogeneous in their offending) then one can only hope that the robbery squad

is in constant contact with the burglary, vice and drug squads. If not then serious offenders will remain unidentified unless they fit nicely into a specialist squad's remit. Specialist squads are, by their nature, put together to focus on serious crime committed by serious criminals. They focus on gathering information on, for example, known bank robbers and their possible plans for future robberies and not on their commission of other offences, some minor but more frequent.

With regard to the identification of active serious offenders, the organization of police services into specialist squads rests primarily on the fact that a known offender is of a particular type, rather than on the knowledge that serious offenders are versatile in their offences and so likely to be identifiable by any of a range of crimes which they commit. We will return to this point in Chap. 7 in our discussion of the likely pitfalls and barriers to implementing the SSP approach we believe exist at the moment (for UK policing at least).

From the mid 1980s, despite considerable investment in personnel, resources and technology, there was an increasing frustration in government and at senior police levels with a perceived failure to reduce crime and increase detection rates, as crime continued to rise (John and Maguire 2007). The Audit Commission (1993, cited by John and Maguire 2007), for example, claimed,

The police and the rest of the criminal justice system are caught in a vicious circle of reactive policing in which crime threatens to overwhelm them. (1993, p. 40)

Arguments grew for the adoption of more 'proactive' methods for reducing crime such as Situational Crime Prevention, where organizations and individuals so design and modify environments as to make crime less likely by becoming more risky or less rewarding (see e.g. Clarke 1997), and those aimed at more 'intelligence-led' proactive policing, particularly for crimes yielding little by way of crime scene evidence (e.g. a burglary scene without fingerprints or DNA traces).

The Audit Commission was by no means alone in seeing a role for intelligence-led policing in reducing crime by targeting 'prolific and priority' offenders, as previously discussed, those responsible for disproportional

tionate amounts of crime, much of it serious (Home Office 2004). Senior officers and government ministers also saw the potential, with intelligence seen as key to this new proactive approach.

Adopting a more proactive, ‘intelligence-led’ stance was considered a way of overcoming traditional ‘reactive shortcomings’ such as evidential limitations (particularly the reduction of uncorroborated confessions), pressures for the more efficient use of resources and an increased focus on serious crime¹ as potentially providing “powerful alternative forms of evidence” (John and Maguire 2007, p. 201).

Traditionally, as has been mentioned, most police ‘intelligence’ has been the result of information supplied by the public, often in the official reporting of crimes, or more recently through schemes such as ‘Crimestoppers’ (a charitable organization where witnesses and others can give information about crimes and in some instances receive a cash reward for doing so) or ‘Crimewatch’ (a BBC television show) where information can be given to police anonymously, with witnesses and victims helping police to identify active serious offenders.

Since the early 1990s, the tactical use of intelligence has grown considerably, demonstrated in the collection and use of intelligence becoming a priority for mainstream as well as investigative policing. This ‘intelligence-led’ approach has influenced not just the tactical and operational use of intelligence. Strategically, it has formed the basis for managerial decision-making and resource prioritization within police forces (John and Maguire 2004, 2007), exemplified by the ‘National Intelligence Model’ (HMIC 1997). Commonly referred to as the ‘NIM’, all forces had to become National Intelligence Model compliant, embedding NIM in every police Basic Command Unit (BCU) in England and Wales by April 2004, and some of its major facets are described in Box 2.1.

Adoption of the intelligence-led policing approach and the implementation of NIM² has led to a much more analytical approach to understanding and reducing crime, nowhere more than in the collation and analysis of intelligence. Cope (2003) considers crime analysis as involving,

¹ For more details see e.g. John and Maguire (2003, 2004) and Tilley (2005).

² Though the NIM has the anti-analytic effect of concentrating deployment decisions away from front-line officers.

Box 2.1 The National Intelligence Model (NIM) for Policing in England and Wales

The NIM identifies the “core business of policing as managing crime, managing criminals, managing localized disorder, managing enforcement and community issues and reducing opportunities for crime” (John and Maguire 2007, p. 210).

The NIM takes a much wider view of criminal intelligence encompassing more than the traditional ‘proactive policing’ approach of targeting the usual suspects. It calls for the drawing of intelligence from much wider sources such as ‘community’ and ‘contextual’ intelligence, as well as intelligence on crime and criminals (John and Maguire 2007).

The NIM is concerned with intelligence at all levels of policing: (1) local area; (2) force/regional; and (3) national. The NIM represents a standardized framework for policing practice in the UK and with particular regard to the systematic use of intelligence in identifying, investigating and bringing to justice, active serious offenders and POPOs.

The synthesis of police and other relevant data to identify and interpret patterns and trends in crime, to inform the police and judicial practice. (p. 340)

The collection, maintenance, analysis and dissemination of information, made possible by advances in information technology and the availability of ‘big data’, has impacted on policing, especially by facilitating a more joined-up approach to criminal investigation and the identification of active serious offenders (Ratcliffe 2008). In the past, information about crimes and criminals generally remained confined to individual officers and was rarely collated, with ‘one-off’ tips rarely producing good intelligence (John and Maguire 2007). The collation of investigation data has also been identified as an area of investigative failure by several high profile enquiries such as the Yorkshire Ripper investigation (Byford 1981)³ and the Soham murders (Bichard 2004).⁴

³ Byford, L. (1981). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sir-lawrence-byford-report-into-the-police-handling-of-the-yorkshire-ripper-case> (accessed 5 January 2016).

⁴ <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6394/1/report.pdf> (accessed 5 January 2016).

Now information can be stored, cross-referenced and collated across forces. Seemingly disparate, small pieces of information when linked together can be of considerable importance to a criminal investigation (Ratcliffe 2008). For example, when investigating a spate of burglaries where the offender has used a suction-cup to remove a kitchen window, it is now relatively simple to produce a list of possible suspects using the same modus operandi (Rossmo 2009). Although, still focusing on known suspects, the suspect pool now can be drawn from beyond just the local area and specifically targeted by modus operandi, thus minimizing possible harassment of the ‘usual suspects’ with ‘previous’ for burglary.

So what is meant by police ‘intelligence’? Innes et al. (2005, p. 44) differentiate four different modes of intelligence:

- Criminal Intelligence: detailing the activities of a ‘known’ suspect or suspects
- Crime Intelligence: enhancing the police’s understanding about a specific crime or series of crimes
- Community Intelligence: based upon data provided to the police by ‘ordinary’ members of the public
- Contextual Intelligence: relating to wider, social, economic and cultural factors that may impact upon levels of crime and patterns of offending.

We conclude this section with a brief look at an additional way of identifying offenders, a set of methods known as ‘offender profiling’.

2.3 Offender Profiling

An additional approach sometimes employed in criminal investigations to help identify unknown serious offenders for specific (often serial) offences is offender profiling. A detailed examination of offender profiling is expertly provided in many places elsewhere (e.g. Ainsworth 2001;

Alison 2005; Alison et al. 2007) and so is not warranted for the present chapter. A quick look shall suffice here.

Although no universally accepted definition of offender profiling appears to exist (Gudjonsson and Copson 1997) in simple terms it constitutes use of the characteristics of an offence to infer characteristics of the offender (e.g. personality). Offender profiling comprises several different approaches to identifying often serious unknown offenders, including that developed by such diverse groups as the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), psychiatrists and clinical psychologists and geographers (see our friend Peter Ainsworth's 2001 book for an excellent account). Regardless of the preferred approach, profiling relies on a series of common assumptions. What is important is not the detail of the approaches but what they generally have in common, to differing degrees: homology and behavioural consistency (Alison et al. 2007; Woodhams et al. 2007). It is suggested that offender profiling operates on a central assumption which Mokros and Alison term the 'homology assumption',

The same behavioural dispositions that determine the style of the crime scene behaviour are reflected in more general, non-offence patterns in the individual's life. (2002, p. 118)

For the profiling of unknown offenders to be feasible, an individual's behaviour must remain consistent across crimes. For example, if he talks to his victims while sexual assaulting them he should do this with each consecutive victim (Woodhams et al. 2007). There is some evidence of behavioural consistency demonstrated by research on rape and burglary (e.g. Alison et al. 2007) and serial murder (e.g. Salfati and Bateman 2005; Woodhams et al. 2007). In one of the best reviews of the offender-profiling literature linking criminal offences to serious offenders by behaviour exhibited at the crime scene, Woodhams et al. (2007) found that this approach was still far from being an exact science. They concluded that linking offences to offenders by behavioural analysis was fraught with difficulties, with none greater than the unreliability of offender behavioural consistency.

Evidence for offender homology is more contested (see e.g. Mokros and Alison 2002). Homology assumes that where two different offenders are of the same ‘personality type’ they will commit a crime in the same way (Alison et al. 2007). The FBI profiling approach, for example, maintains that if two crime scenes are the same then the same type of individual committed them, either an ‘organized’ or dis-organized’ personality. This is a major contention between different profiling approaches which is far beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice to say that, to different degrees, proponents of offender profiling claim that serious offenders should be considered consistent and homologous, in their offending being more offence specialized than versatile. We don’t agree at all!

Unsurprisingly, *minor* offences do not feature very highly in most offender profiles. As part of a profile, hypothetical offence histories are generated for unknown offenders, often with minor offences only mentioned as probable juvenile ‘first offences’, at the beginning of a criminal career, abandoned once the crime escalation process kicks in (e.g. shop theft or joyriding seen as indicative of later more serious offending). Minor offences are deemed to represent ‘stepping stones’ in a serious criminal career. Some mention is made, however, in the offender-profiling literature, of concurrent minor offending, for example, a paedophile lying about qualifications in order to get a job giving access to children, or a serial killer displaying false number plates on their vehicle, as with Peter Sutcliffe. Some have gone further, in suggesting, for example, that in cases of child abduction police should look at traffic violations committed in the area in question on the day of the offence, with particular emphasis on those caught speeding around the time of disappearance (Alison 2005; Alison et al. 2007).

The significance of minor offences committed by active serious offenders is generally, therefore, given little consideration by offender profilers. Where it is so taken, however, it provides support to the SSP approach. For example, Bouhana (2004) found when profiling arsonists that they tended to be offence versatile, committing minor as well as serious offences.

Put simply, we are sceptical of the assumptions underpinning offender profiling. We now move to convince the reader why we believe SSP

presents a promising approach by which active, serious offenders can be identified, and which complements other existing methods of investigation. The unique attribute of SSP is that it assumes nothing beyond the association of criminality with other criminality.

3 Chapter Summary

This chapter began with a brief review of traditional and current police methods for identifying serious offenders, with the aim of demonstrating how adoption of the SSP approach would complement these. Our aim was not to criticize traditional and extant police methods of identifying serious offenders, by calling for wholesale change. This would be to refute the fact that traditional methods can and do yield results time and again, although such methods are not without their limitations. Instead, it is about exploring how, as a complementary investigative method, SSP might advance effectiveness in this area. For example, as discussed previously, the effectiveness of the traditional targeting of known offenders has been questioned (Townesley and Pease 2002). We now move to the question of support for the three main premises on which SSP rests:

- that serious offenders are crime versatile
- that serious offenders will commit small as well as serious crimes
- that an identifiable link exists between some minor offences and serious offenders.

To this aim, in the next chapter we begin with arguably the most important premise in the viability of SSP by presenting the theoretical and research support for the versatile serious offender.

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3

Are Serious Criminals Really Offence Versatile?

1 Introduction

To restate the central point, SSP is a means by which active, serious offenders can be identified, by the minor crimes that they commit (Roach 2007a, b). It has certain advantages over traditional methods in that it focuses exclusively on what people do rather than who they are or have been in the past. As discussed in the previous chapter, although an emergent method for police to utilize, it will not, nor is it intended to, replace more established investigative methods like collecting witness accounts, analysing CCTV footage, or matching the modus operandi to those known to have committed previous offences in similar ways (i.e. the usual 'known' suspects).

At the risk of complicating matters, we invite the reader to think in terms of SSP and traditional methods as complementary aspects of a whole investigative strategy. SSP identifies people on the basis of their commission of *different* offences around the *same* time as the serious offences of central concern. Analysis of modus operandi identifies people on the basis of their commission of *similar* offences at *different* times. The approaches are imperfect in different ways. They share the crucial

advantage of using events rather than personal characteristics as the route to detection. Nor do we think offence versatility is universal among serious offenders. Where crime is a business requiring a low profile to be kept, crime bosses may explicitly require those in their organization to avoid actions which may attract police attention.

We begin here by dissecting what exactly the SSP approach needs to evidence in order for it to be a realistic and attractive proposition. Try Box 3.1 below for starters.

Box 3.1 Think About It: So What Do You Think About Offending Patterns?

Imagine you are asked to predict the next type of offence which is going to be committed by a man whose last offence was burglary. What do you think that his next type of offence (and he will offend again) is most likely to be out of;

- Burglary?
- Car theft?
- Robbery?
- Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH)?

Now imagine a different man whose last offence was GBH. What do you think is most likely to be the next type of crime that he commits?

We predict that you answered burglary for the first question and GBH (or some other type of violent crime for the second question). Why? Because we tend to consider offenders to be 'offence homogenous', specializing in only one or two types of crime.

Don't worry, we asked a sample of police officers to predict likely next offences in much the same way as we asked you (Roach and Pease 2013, discussed in Chap. 7). They answered in exactly the same way, overestimating offence homogeneity (specialization) every time.

Hopefully, by the end of this chapter we will have convinced you that offenders don't commit their crimes in such neat patterns but that they favour offence versatility not specialization.

If you answered the questions along the lines of 'the next offence could be equally any of those or any others', then well done, you're top of the class smarty pants.

Following on from the exercise in Box 3.1, for SSP to be a viable proposition three assumptions are made. These are set out below:

- **Most active, serious offenders are ‘crime versatile’.** They tend to be ‘generalists’ who commit an array of different types of crime rather than specializing in one type of crime (or put another way that their offending is *heterogeneous* rather than *homogeneous*).
- **Active, serious offenders are wedded to rule-breaking. They commit minor offences as well as serious ones.** These might include such minor infractions of the law as driving on bald tyres or along motorway hard shoulders, or not having an up-to-date television licence. Someone who commits a number of burglaries is unlikely to walk past an unlocked car with a laptop on the back seat without seizing the opportunity, simply because they consider themselves a specialised type of thief.
- **Particular links exist between active serious offenders and *specific* minor offences.** Identifiable ‘trigger’ offences frequently committed by active serious offenders may, therefore, be used as flags of active serious criminality that manifests itself when further police scrutiny is applied. In other words, minor offences vary in their usefulness to SSP. Because the most common types of offence concern theft and motoring, they are likely to be the most promising candidates as trigger offences.

This chapter, in the main, constitutes a review of the literature relating to the first two premises. We begin with exploration of the support for the SSP approach. In this we are hampered by a pervasive problem which dogs the supply of evidence for offender versatility across a wide range of seriousness. Imagine you are looking at your medical record. It will contain all the illnesses and accidents which took you to your local doctor or hospital. It will not contain anything about the times you felt ill and went to bed for a few days or the cuts and grazes you just washed and bandaged. In short, it will not tell you about the minor stuff. Likewise policing has been likened to a triage process where an officer decides to do nothing, to give advice or to take official action (Klinger 1999). So most trigger crimes remain unrecorded. It is as though they never happened. Yet they are the raw material of SSP.

2 Building the Case for the Versatile Offender

The first key premise on which SSP rests is that offenders are versatile enough in their offending to render the SSP approach viable. The next part of this chapter rehearses some general criminological theories in search of insights about offending versatility. Those familiar with or bored by such theory may wish to skip to the section headed ‘The Versatile offender: the proof of the pudding, on page 40.’

In this section we present the case for the versatile offender based upon both theory and research. For those wishing an anecdote before skimming this section, we offer the following. One of the writers, many years ago, went with a group of men, most with lengthy criminal records, on a trip to Hampton Court Palace. Being young and naïve, this seemed something to look forward to. In the event it was a nightmare. Roped-off areas were invaded, all route directions ignored and anything in reach not to be touched was handled. The uniformed staff ended up shepherding the uncowed group towards the exit. Nothing serious resulted (this was not always true with this group) but it persuaded the writer that the group had a general indifference to or contempt of rules, and it was opportunity and perceived advantage which determined which rules would be broken. A day at Hampton Court Palace was thus the day on which one of us was converted to the truth of offender versatility.¹

The most serious criminals provide more interesting examples of versatility. Kenny Noye is one of them, convicted of murder and the massive Brink’s Mat robbery, among other serious offences. While running a gold smuggling business, he became irritated by vandalism of his Rolls Royce and instead used an old Ford Escort for visits to his local pub which “had no MOT or tax.”² ‘If the cozzies [police] give me a hard time about it I’ll call one of my mates and get it sorted’” (Clarkson 2006, p. 71). Noye kept a loaded shotgun in the boot of the car, which he discharged in a pub on two occasions. When moving into an expensive new house, he diverted the electricity from the street supply to avoid paying for it (Clarkson 2006, p. 41).

¹ The other one of us once took two people with learning difficulties on holiday to Menorca, and is convinced that the Hampton Court incident was a walk in the park by comparison.

² Ministry of Transport Certificate of Roadworthiness see <https://www.gov.uk/getting-an-mot?the-mot-testhttps://www.gov.uk/getting-an-mot?the-mot-test> (Accessed 2/09/2016).

The notorious South London criminal, and probably contract killer, Jimmy Moody, after his first custodial sentence resumed “stealing cars ... committing burglaries and causing mayhem ... If Moody was hard up and wanted a new suit he’d walk into a branch of the men’s outfitters, Burton’s, wearing an old pair of jeans and a tatty shirt, put on a new suit in the changing room and run out of the shop at high speed” (Clarkson 2008, p. 24). In his autobiography (subtitled “The Godfather of British Crime”) Freddie Foreman describes his early sexual experiences: “her protests were never meant to carry much weight” (p. 43); and his acquisition of driving skill is described as follows: “I bought a five hundredweight Ford van and, through trial and error, taught myself to drive it. Driving licences were provided by a friend in County Hall ... We used to nick anything and everything” (pp. 44–45). The doctor who treated injuries incurred by Foreman’s firm was described in the following terms: “Fred was a very trustworthy man ... the authorities didn’t matter to him” (Foreman 2007, p. 170).

If you think you need the research evidence for serious offender versatility read on. We hope you do, so as to provide ammunition for use against the sceptics. Otherwise skip to the next section. It really is a no-brainer that Noye, prepared to stab two men fatally, would really care about vehicle taxation. If you are prepared to break major rules, you will break minor rules too. The only exception may be where your career in crime leads someone to keep a low profile. Even there, it seems extraordinarily difficult for major criminals to forgo minor rule-breaking. We will now take a brief diversion to look briefly at explanations for why people commit crime before looking at offence versatility.

1. *Individual explanations of crime and criminality*

Many theories of crime cause focus on risk or protective factors operating on the individual offender, variably evident according to context. Such theories tend to posit a general tendency to criminality, rather than a specific tendency to rob, steal, cheat or attack, with sex offenders, cyber criminals and terrorists perhaps being seen as exceptions. Explanations that focus on, for example, personality, psychopathy, learning, parental style, biology or social malleability, seek to provide blanket explanations for why individuals offend, rather than why they might commit the specific offences they do. Some accounts acknowledge this. For example, in their

'General Theory of Crime' Hirschi and Gottfredson (1988) proposed that it is self-control that acts as principal barrier to the commission of crime, self-control being a trait that precludes a range of attributes linked with criminality, such as impulsivity, 'self-centredness', inability to persevere in a line of activity, and an inclination to participate in risky (often thrilling) activities (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi and Gottfredson 1993). Individuals show variation in levels of self-control, attributed to 'weak parenting practices', which include "lax supervision, inconsistent discipline, and attenuated affectional ties" (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990, pp. 89–91). Low self-control is held to manifest itself in a plethora of different ways including criminality (Piquero et al. 1999, p. 278). Hirschi and Gottfredson (1988, 1993, 1995) thus provide a good example of a theory which encompasses all types of crime, as does Wikström (2005).

Of most importance to SSP is that Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory advances some clear hypotheses about offending versatility (Piquero et al. 1999). First, it predicts that offenders will not tend to specialize, with low self-control manifesting itself in many different ways, opportunity and situation being the determining factors; "within the domain of crime ... there will be much versatility among offenders in the acts in which they engage" (1990, p. 91). This suggests that "today's robber may very well be tomorrow's auto thief and next week's burglar" (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990 cited in Piquero et al. 1999, p. 279). Indeed, Hirschi and Gottfredson (1995) consider the connection between low self-control and criminal diversity strong enough, that summing the different types of offending behaviour for each person constitutes a valid index of an individual's self-control, acting as a kind of variety scale. People with low levels of self-control commit offences across the board and start their criminal careers early. Hirschi and Gottfredson's (1988) general theory predicts that individuals with low self-control will begin offending early in life (i.e. early onset criminal career). As will be discussed later in the chapter, research suggests that the two aspects of a criminal career do go together. Early starters are less specialized (e.g. Blumstein et al. 1986, 1988; Piquero et al. 1999). A recent and comprehensive depiction of the criminal career literature is to be found in Farrington et al. (2013). The book provides the occasional clue about possible trigger offences including benefit fraud, obstructing the police and shop theft.

In her '*Developmental Taxonomy*' Terrie Moffitt (1997, 1999, 2003) seeks to account for desistance. Some offenders desist. Some don't. Her taxonomy identifies two distinct groups of offender, *life-course persistent*

and *adolescence limited*, influenced by different sets of criminogenic and antisocial factors, which extend over an individual's life. The taxonomy takes the aggregate age-crime curve (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983; Farrington 1986) as a starting point and seeks to explain why some offenders engage in a relatively stable level of criminal activity throughout life (or at least until the Zimmer frame cramps their style). These are the 'life-course persistent' group of offenders. The clue is in the name! The characteristics and features of this group is shown in Box 3.2.

Box 3.2 Life-Course Persistent Offenders

The life-course persistent group of offenders is characterized by an early onset of crime, displaying active and persistent offending and showing crime versatility throughout the life-course. Moffitt (2003) suggests that as peer influence is not a necessary factor for life-course persistent offenders, they commit some of their crimes alone. In more recent work such offenders are explained as possessing "inherited or acquired neuro-psychological variations" (Piquero and Moffitt 2004, p. 179). Moffitt and colleagues suggest that life-course persistent offenders are predisposed to crime and antisocial behaviour as a result of an inherited and/or early acquired neuropsychological deficit (Ishikawa and Raine 2003; Moffitt 2003). The gene variant MOAO which lowers the activity of the enzyme monoamine oxidase A and which seems implicated in violence is identified as being of particular interest (Caspi et al. 2002).

These 'variations' may become manifest as a difficult temperament, hyperactivity or some more subtle cognitive deficits (Moffitt 2003). However, the taxonomy also acknowledges the importance of the environment in shaping the life-course persistent offender, paying particular attention to commonly identified risk factors such as lack of pro-social modelling, inadequate parenting, disrupted family bonds and poverty (e.g. Farrington and Hawkins 1991). All these factors contribute to an exacerbation of risk for the adolescent, behaviour which continues into mid-life (Piquero and Moffitt 2004, p. 178).

After the life-persistent offender has emerged, according to Moffitt (1997, 1999) environmental influences acting on the life-persistent group expand as the child gets older, for example, resulting in the forming of poor relationships with parents and teachers and unhealthy relationships with peers. The taxonomy goes further, suggesting that the interactions between individual and the environment combine to construct a 'disordered personality', which is hallmarked by physical aggression and antisocial behaviour. The suggestion is that he or she (and Moffitt suggests that it is considerably more likely to be a he) will be distinctive in many aspects of life, such as employment, family life, criminal activity and victimization. Moffitt (1999) paints a bleak future for this group suggesting that they have few (if any) opportunities for change (e.g. pro-social modelling, where social as opposed to antisocial behaviour is mimicked), so are likely to remain active serious offenders with extensive and varied offence histories.

The second group identified by Moffitt in her taxonomy, ‘*adolescence limited*’, grow out of crime (Piquero and Moffitt 2004). Moffitt identifies a maturity gap and peer social context as important factors underlying adolescence-limited delinquency. Parallels can be drawn between this approach and the work of identity theorists such as Erik Erikson (1968) and James Marcia (1966) who suggest that it is during adolescence that we begin to try out different identities, with rebelliousness, risk taking and rule-breaking common behaviour. Brief forays into criminality are often included in the process. The characteristics and common features of this group are presented in Box 3.3.

Box 3.3 Adolescence-Limited Offenders

The adolescence-limited group is considered by far the larger of the two and primarily social in orientation as offending is usually in groups. Offending generally constitutes relatively minor offences such as petty theft, low-level vandalism and minor road traffic violations. In contrast to the life-course persistent group, because the adolescence-limited group displays ‘normal’ pre-delinquent development, most possess the characteristics and abilities necessary to desist from offending as they move into adult roles, for example, the ability to form good relationships and the cognitive skills required to begin a career. Members of this group are usually able to return gradually to ‘a more conventional lifestyle’ (Piquero and Moffitt 2004). There can of course be ‘snares’ which delay or hamper a return to a conventional lifestyle, such as receiving a criminal record, drug addiction and unwanted pregnancy. These people, according to Piquero and Moffitt (2004), should be considered only the unhappy few (Piquero and Moffitt 2004).

What do you think of Moffitt’s taxonomy? Do you think it adequately explains the difference between offenders?

Moffitt’s developmental taxonomy, with its explanation of offending based on a distinction between life-course persistent and adolescence-limited offenders, has support from a number of sources (see Piquero and Moffitt 2004 for a full summary). One study that focused explicitly on the age-crime relationship by using self-report data from a cohort of 16–25 year-old males in England and Wales, found a significant difference particularly for property and handling stolen goods offences between those who had left school by 16 years and those who had not.

Those who stayed on at school desisted from these crimes at a much earlier age (Lehr et al. 2003). Leaving school at the minimum legal age has been identified as a significant ‘risk factor’ pointing to a protracted criminal career (see e.g. Farrington and Hawkins 1991) and one likely to involve both serious and less serious offences. This position is not, however, without its challengers. The two-group distinction, for example, has been considered by some as overly simplistic, with further groups being identified such as ‘low-level chronics’, who although they persistently offend throughout the life-course, they do so at a relatively minor offence level. As such they do not appear to fit into either of Moffitt’s offender groups (see Piquero and Moffitt 2004 for a candid self-critique). Perhaps we digress as whether two groups, four or ten, it matters little to SSP for it suffices to say that Moffitt’s taxonomy is entirely consistent with the necessary premise of offender versatility. The life-course persistent group which commits a broad array of crimes and is unlikely to balk at more minor criminality, represents the primary target group for the police. Even the fiercest of Moffitt’s critics (not that we really know any) would not reject the general validity of the distinction between those whose criminality is transient and those whose offending endures. Moffitt is right. We’ll leave others to squabble about the details.

In this section we have shown briefly how more general theories of crime and criminality lend support to the first two premises of SSP; that most serious offenders will be versatile in their offending, and that the versatility is (so to speak) both horizontal and vertical in terms of the offences which they are prepared to commit. We move on to another key area when explaining crime and criminality which is less about individual propensities and more about the effects of environments on human behaviour.

2. *Environmental theories of crime*

Although certain individual or dispositional factors predispose some people towards criminal behaviour (and rule-breaking generally) we are always thinking about probabilities. The generally blameless will err sometimes. As wise criminologist Jesus Christ opined “Let him who is without fault cast the first stone”. The habitual criminal will be law-abiding much

of the time. Serial murderers are not serial murderers twenty-four-seven (arguably excluding leaders of corrupt regimes and they delegate). Serial killers (usually defined as killing three or more people in separate murderous events) seem to be as selective as other types of offender with regard to when and where they commit their crimes (see e.g. Holmes and Holmes 2002; Ainsworth 2001; Alison et al. 2007). To understand the reasons why some crimes occur, external, environmental and situational factors must be considered alongside individual and dispositional ones (Wortley 2011). This is the realm of what is known collectively as *environmental criminology* (Brantingham and Brantingham 1991). We should think about thresholds for action. Every situation presents a perceptual hurdle over which someone has to climb before committing a crime. For example, secure homes in cul-de-sacs present a high hurdle. Unoccupied homes with an open window present a low hurdle. People differ in criminal disposition such that they are prepared to get over hurdles of a particular height. The most criminally disposed will not be put off by a high hurdle. Those less inclined will surmount only lower hurdles. Added to this, the same individual will tolerate hurdles of different heights at different times. If penniless, needing a drug fix or especially bored, higher hurdles will be attempted. We thus have three variables: enduring personal disposition, environmental hurdles and transient personal state. No wonder we have to think in probabilities. Events must be understood as 'confluences' of offenders, victims/targets and laws, in specific settings at specific places and times (Brantingham and Brantingham 1991, p. 2).

Environmental criminologists look for crime patterns which they seek to explain in terms of environmental influences (Wortley and Mazerolle 2008). Environmental criminology's distinctive perspective on crime is most in evidence in its contrast with more traditional criminology in that it chooses not to seek to explain how biological, developmental and social factors combine to yield criminality. The environment is deemed a critical determinant of whether a crime is committed. Environmental criminologists are concerned with what the current dynamics of a crime are, for example, where did it happen, who was involved, how did they do it (Wortley and Mazerolle 2008). Put bluntly, it facilitates crime prevention by modifying those properties and elements identified as consistent with its commission. For example, alley-gating initiatives in the UK in recent years were implemented to reduce envi-

ronmental factors identified to be conducive to crime, such as the closing of alleys, in high crime areas, used by offenders (particularly burglars) as a means of concealment and escape (Bowers et al. 2005). This is not about understanding how individuals become criminal in the first place any more than it is about reforming or rehabilitating them. In this approach offenders are so inclined, for whatever reason, end of story.

Environmental criminology comprises a collection of theories and approaches, the common strand being the belief that in order to understand and prevent crime, detailed attention must be paid to crime opportunities afforded by different environments (Pease 2008; Roach 2012; Roach and Pease 2013). A person using a mobile phone whilst walking along a busy street, for example, represents a robbery opportunity to some (and an opportunity for a road traffic accident to our distracted phone-user!). So how does environmental criminology support our case for crime-versatile offenders (particularly those committing serious crimes)? The answer lies in its theoretical underpinning.

Support for the versatile offender rests on the same three theoretical strands which underpin environmental criminology: *Rational Choice Theory*, *Routine Activity Theory* and *Crime Pattern Theory*. These are described briefly next.

2.1 Rational Choice Theory

Crime is considered rational behaviour (at least in the short term) if the criminal employs reason and “acts purposely to gain desired ends” (Walsh and Ellis 2007, p. 56). Cornish and Clarke’s (1986, 2008) rational choice perspective is centred in the here-and-now, as is wider environmental criminology. It is concerned with the influence of the current environment on behaviour and environmental/learning theory. The significance of Rational Choice Theory for offence versatility (and the wider SSP approach) is that it predicts that individuals will offend if they consider the environment and situation conducive to doing so; that is if the perceived risks are sufficiently low and perceived rewards sufficiently high. The perception of risk and reward is obviously subjective.

Where one individual perceives a crime opportunity as too risky, another may not (Pease 2006; Roach 2012). A rational choice perspective, therefore, supports the central premises of SSP in the following ways

- Individuals are likely to be versatile in their offending as opportunity plays a role and as opportunities vary, versatility is anticipated. In the eighteenth century there was perhaps one horse thief for every hundred horses. As the horse population fell, the ratio would become perhaps one horse thief per horse. Sensible horse thieves would move to offences where the field was less crowded.
- Active serious offenders are highly unlikely to balk at committing minor offences as, by definition, minor crime generally carries little risk of detection or serious punishment. Put another way, those who take large risks to commit serious crimes are unlikely to be deterred by small risk minor crimes (the hurdle metaphor applies).

We explore the supporting research evidence for these premises in the next chapter, but for now our concern continues to be with theoretical explanations for criminal versatility.

2.2 Routine Activity Approach

Arguably, the theoretical approach in criminology that has most strongly stressed the importance in crime causation of the intersection of individual and setting is the routine activity approach (Cohen and Felson 1979; Felson 1994). Cohen and Felson suggest that much of the crime committed in cities occurs because of the convergence of three elements—a *motivated offender*, a *suitable victim or target* and the *absence of a capable guardian* (someone or something whose presence would have deterred the offender, even if just a member of the public passing by). The principal focus is on how different types of environment and setting influence the occurrence of crime, rather than about how types of individual intersections with types of settings create specific acts of crime (Wikström 2005). The focus is, therefore, on what makes for the perception of opportunity, and not how the offender got to be motivated in the first place,

variations in degree of motivation, or how motivation intersects with presenting situational features (Pease 2006, p. 56). Felson (1998) indeed suggests that crime needs no special motivation as it is mainly the result of an absence of controls to prevent it; “crime is committed mainly by people who are tempted more and controlled less” (Felson 1998, p. 23). Offender decision-making, according to Felson, is easily understood: each offender has situational inducements to commit a crime and will be more induced to commit it the more rewarding and less risky it is perceived to be (Felson 1998).

Routine Activity (or RAT as it is sometimes referred) has done a lot to advance our understanding of the importance of the role of settings and environments in crime causation, contending that crime rates are best regarded as the unwanted consequence of routine everyday life (Pease 2006). Collective changes in routines play significant roles in types of settings in which crime occurs (Wikström 2005). One example offered is burglary which was seen to rise in America in the 1960s as a consequence of women beginning to enter the workforce in significant numbers for the first time (at least in peacetime). More women at work meant fewer ‘capable guardians’ at home, translating to more opportunity for burglary (Felson 1994). Felson also addresses issues such as the widening gap between sexual maturity and economic independence as a factor inclining to crime; sexual maturity comes earlier and economic independence now comes much later in life, if indeed it comes at all (Roach and Pease 2013). So how does this lend theoretical support to our vital premises that serious offenders are crime versatile and likely to commit small as well as big crimes?

Although devised initially as an explanation for street robbery but based now on extensive research on other types of crime, RAT lends strong support to the SSP approach by identifying environments and situations as important in crime commission, with versatile offenders demonstrating a heterogeneity in their offences, acting (or not) on opportunities as they present themselves rather than as dedicated crime specialists. Cohen and Felson (although initially concerned with violence) subsequently make little distinction between a routine-activities explanation of serious and minor offending, their theory being one for all crime.

2.3 Crime Pattern Theory

Crime Pattern Theory (Brantingham and Brantingham 1984, 1991) seeks to explain why crime occurs where it does, which is another important consideration when trying to discern whether serious criminals are offence versatile and so commit small as well as big crimes. In Crime Pattern Theory (CPT) it is emphasized that crime is not randomly distributed in time and space, but clusters in patterns, the identification and understanding of which is its objective (Brantingham and Brantingham 1984, 1991). The form that clustering crime takes is greatly influenced by factors such as where people live, how they travel about and how 'networks' of people spend time with each other. Individuals, according to CPT, move around in 'activity spaces' encompassed by several primary 'nodes' such as place of residence, place of work and places of shopping and leisure (e.g. shopping malls, sports centres and pubs), connected by pathways (Brantingham and Brantingham 1984). According to CPT, those who commit crime have spatio-temporal movement patterns like anyone else, that is, they move between nodes along pathways (Brantingham and Brantingham 1984). Criminals, therefore, are most likely to commit their initial crimes (at least) along learned paths or activity nodes, between residences of friends, places of work and places of leisure (Rossmo 2009). This is an explanation for why crime clusters in these areas, some becoming crime generators and some crime attractors.

The importance for our two key premises is that the CPA approach heavily suggests offenders commit crimes between home, work and their activity spaces, as they move around engaged in their daily routines. Presumably, even serious offenders also commit more minor offences (and probably more frequently) as part of the routine activities of their daily lives.

Summarizing our exploration of criminological theory so far, we have found much to support two of the central premises of the SSP approach; that serious offenders are often versatile in their offending, and as such they are likely to commit small as well as big crimes. Theoretical support offered from environmental criminology, for example, supports the first two premises in that serious offenders are likely to be offence versatile

because they select which crimes to commit as opportunities present themselves, usually discovered in the course of their everyday lives as they go about their daily routines. As such, they are highly likely to commit small as well as big crimes as they present themselves.

We continue to provide further support for our two key premises by completing this chapter with a review of the literature which relates specifically to offending patterns, that of 'criminal careers'.

3 The Versatile Offender: The Proof of the Pudding

The punch line from the section on theory is that, in one way or another, all of the popular current theoretical perspectives on crime would lead one to anticipate offender versatility in one form or another. Theories emphasizing a criminal personality (more often thought of as composites of personality dimensions like impulsivity and extraversion) would suggest that people would engage in a range of criminal behaviours so long as they served their self-interest, be it sexual, emotional or acquisitive. Situational theories would suggest people commit crime to the extent to which people perceive the opportunity to do so. Putting the two perspectives together people will commit crime to the extent that they are personally disposed to and perceive the opportunity to do so. The only approach which would not suggest widespread versatility would be one in which needs to be satisfied were entirely independent of each other; if sexual needs were independent of needs to injure people or gain material rewards. Even then, there would be residual versatility within general offence categories. In short, offender versatility would be predicted by pretty much the whole range of tenable criminological perspectives.

A criminal career has been defined as "the characterization of the longitudinal sequence of crimes committed by an individual offender" (Blumstein et al. 1986, p. 12). Use of the term 'career' to describe a sequence of offences is an interesting one, conjuring up a shadow version of a 'legitimate employment' career comprising a series of roles, positions and employing organizations: promotions and responsibilities held. In a 'legitimate career' it is commonplace to consider a longitudinal view of

how an individual has moved through their working life, from place to place, job to job, role to role etc. A career, for example, can be one role or position, one role but many positions or as is perhaps most common nowadays, diverse roles and positions throughout an individual's working life.

Only a brief excursion into criminal career research will be taken here. There are conventionally four components of a criminal career; onset, duration, frequency and seriousness. Onset concerns the risk and protective factors which combine to determine whether one becomes a criminal in the first place. Duration concerns time elapsed between onset and desistance or death. Frequency concerns how often someone commits crime (usually designated in the literature as λ) and finally seriousness, that is how serious are the crimes committed. There are problems with criminal career research, illustrated in Box 3.4. We mention these in passing.

Box 3.4 Think About It: So What's the Problem with Criminal Career Research?

Often, conclusions drawn from criminal career research are developed from the use of aggregate crime data, which itself is not beyond criticism. The extent that conclusions can be reliably drawn from the use of large aggregate data sets is consistently controversial. To simplify the argument, the degree to which we can be sure that common conclusions (e.g. the peak age of offending or that early-onset is indicative of a long criminal career) can be drawn from such large aggregate data sets which are sensitive to skewing by the few, is highly debatable. For example, one frequent criticism of aggregate data is that it is not easy to discern whether crime rates are as they are as a result of a large number of individuals committing a few crimes each, or whether it is because a few individuals are committing a large number of offences (e.g. Blumstein et al. 1986). Piquero et al. (1999) expand further, asking how far the observed peak of the aggregate age-crime curve reflects changes within individuals as opposed to changes in the composition of offenders. Put another way, for example, is the peak in the age-crime curve a function of active offenders committing more crime, or is it a consequence of more individuals offending at those peak years?

For present purposes we do not care about onset or duration. Frequency is relevant in that if frequent offenders are also versatile, opportunities for the application of SSP are greater. The key variable of interest is seriousness. We have distinguished earlier between horizontal and vertical versatility. Horizontal versatility concerns the commission of different

offences of roughly similar seriousness. Vertical versatility is a matter of the co-occurrence of serious and trivial offences. Of horizontal versatility there is ample evidence. Vertical versatility is emphasized here since it flags serious criminality on the basis of minor criminality. Horizontal versatility is also relevant insofar as one kind of serious crime is easier of detection as another which it co-occurs. Figure 3.1 is intended as a simple depiction of vertical versatility.

Moving from left to right we find people committing more serious ‘target’ crimes, that is those one especially wants to detect. But the number of lesser ‘trigger’ offences committed does not diminish. People who do big bad things (target offences) still do little bad things (trigger offences).

A conclusion reached many years ago remains the best summary of the position as regards horizontal versatility.

There is a small but significant degree of specialization, superimposed on a great deal of versatility. (Farrington et al. 1988, p. 483)

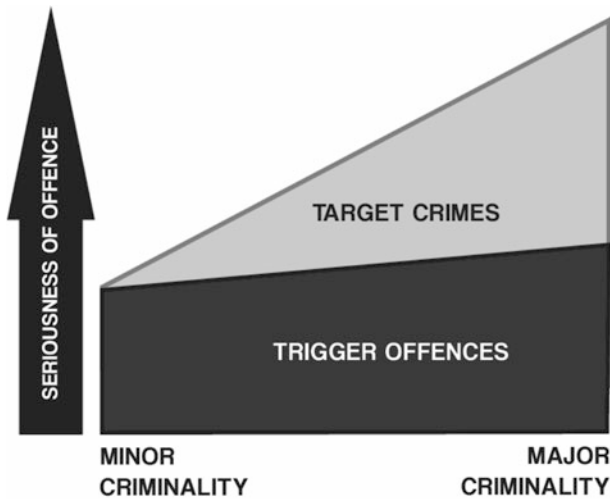


Fig. 3.1 Vertical versatility in offending

and

... people who commit one type of offence have a significant tendency also to commit other types. For example, 86 per cent of convicted violent offenders in the Cambridge Study, also had convictions for non-violent offences. (Farrington 2002, p. 363)

Wolfgang et al. (1972) introduced the transition matrices approach into criminal career analysis with their study of criminal careers, in which they concluded that there “is a weak propensity toward offence type specialization” (1972, p. 249). Transition matrices, “assess the probability of being charged with the same offence on consecutive offending episodes” (Fisher and Ross 2006, p. 155). This method is well explained by Roger Tarling,

Transition matrices show the probability of committing an offence of type j , having committed an offence type i on the previous occasion. Hence, the probabilities P_{ij} indicate the chances of switching from one type of offence to another (offence i to offence j). The probability of committing the same type of offence on each occasion (P_{ii} , P_{jj} etc.) indicates the extent to which offenders specialize in their criminal behaviour. (1993, p. 120)

The degree of escalation or (de-escalation) in the seriousness of offending can be gauged by calculating the probability of committing a more or less serious offence on subsequent occasions (Tarling 1993) whereby separate matrices can be constructed for successive offences at different transitions in a criminal career (e.g. first to second offence, second to third, ninth to tenth etc.). Transition matrices are similar in process to first order Markov chains, which look at the ability to predict future behaviour from past behaviour (e.g. see Wolfgang et al. 1972; Tarling 1993; Le Blanc 2002).

In the simplest way of thinking about offence sequences, it is assumed that the next type of offence committed is dependent only on the current type of offence committed. It is not dependent on the types of previous offences committed. It is, therefore, “long-term memory-less”, in that knowing previous offences further back in time than the current one are considered unhelpful in predicting likely next offence types (Tarling 1993, p. 134). It suffices to

say here that transition matrices were intended to deal with offence progression over a whole criminal career (i.e. from first to last offence) as well as the escalation from minor offences to serious offences. Further discussion of the processes involved is saved for Chap. 7 which deals explicitly with the issue of police predictions of likely next offences, but it is pertinent now to provide discussion of some of the problems and limitations identified with criminal career research.

One last pertinent aspect of criminal career research to cover here concerns the identification of strategic offences (sometimes referred to as ‘gateway’) which offenders disproportionately commit when embarking on a criminal career, and whether it adds weight to the SSP approach.

Leonore Simon, in an illuminating article entitled ‘*Do criminal offenders specialize in crime types?*’, considers offence specialization not only to be a ‘myth’ but one “perpetuated by researchers and legal actors who emphasise the heinous homicides perpetrated by the offender while playing down other forms of criminality” (1997, p. 35). As an example, he cites the varied and extensive criminal career of US serial killer, Henry Lee Lucas, at the expense of Lucas’ most heinous crimes (Simon 1997, p. 35). By ‘researchers’ one trusts she means those investigating criminal careers and there is merit in her appraisal as arguably such researchers have tended to neglect minor offences and those which do not readily fit into neat crime categories. This point is crucial.

Let us be entirely clear. If you define specialists as people whose next offence is entirely predictable from their last offence virtually no offender is a specialist. If you define a generalist as someone whose next offence is entirely unpredictable from their last offence, no one is a generalist. But there is absolutely no doubt that most serious offenders are horizontally versatile. Are they vertically versatile enough to make SSP viable? This requires a way of approaching the literature on self-reported criminality which, if it has been carried out, we remain apologetically ignorant. Even if it had been carried out, we worry that it will still not reveal vertical versatility, not because it does not exist but because the minor stuff is not thought worth mentioning. So if we have to rely on the criminology literature to demonstrate this, we are in trouble. The kind of behaviour which would be attractive as a trigger offence in SSP typically goes under

the radar. People parking on a double yellow line with a murder victim in the boot are unlikely to be sanctioned for the parking offence, and if they are, the task of matching the records of the murder and the parking offence is not straightforward. People self-reporting serious crime may not report shop theft because that is beneath their dignity to confess to. There is a whole raft of official rules and conventions which serve to hide minor offences in the shadow of more serious offences. For example, in the crime counting rules which apply in England and Wales “if the sequence of crimes in an incident, or a complex crime, contains more than one type of crime, then count the most serious crime”. The evidence for vertical versatility comes primarily from the studies, modest and preliminary as they are. Our conviction is that behaviour like parking on double yellow lines is committed utterly without hesitation by those prepared to commit serious offences. We offer a last piece of evidence for offending versatility to Keith Soothill and colleagues in Box 3.5.

Box 3.5 Think About It: Are Those Who Commit Sexual Offences Versatile in Their Offending?

Arguably, those considered to be the most specialist of criminals are sexual offenders, evidenced by dedicated legislation in the UK introduced to deal with them (e.g. Sex Offenders Act 1997, the Children (Protection from Offenders) Regulation 1997, and provision in the more generically prescribed Crime and Disorder Act of 1998). Also meriting in some quarters, there is specialist probation handling (Soothill et al. 2000). It is, therefore, a common belief that sex offenders pose many different problems in contrast to other types of offender, such as having a deeper entrenchment of offending problems and a greater risk to the community. It is not difficult to understand why this group of offenders is considered to comprise consummate specialists (Soothill et al. 2000).

In their study of the criminal careers of over 7,000 UK sex offenders, Soothill et al. (2000) found evidence for differences in offence specialization and versatility between different groups of sex offender with, for example, males convicted of underage sexual intercourse (statutory rape) displaying an offending versatility taking in the full spectrum of criminality. Whereas, those convicted of indecency between males were infrequent re-offenders and when reconvicted this tended to be for the same offence.

Soothill et al. (2000) conclude that with regard to criminal careers, criminologists need to recognize that offending specialization and generalization (versatility) exist at three levels: sex offenders may be specialists, generalists or both.

Another feature of a criminal career which we must deal in passing concerns alleged offending escalation; that is the claim that career criminals move from minor to serious criminality as their career progresses—sometimes termed the ‘graduation hypothesis’. It has been suggested that; “a belief in escalation is probably the most widely held view of the patterns of criminal careers” (Blumstein et al. 1986, p. 84). If escalation is widespread in the sense that serious offenders give up petty crime SSP would be unfeasible. SSP is of course consistent with a slightly different take on escalation. If the average seriousness of crimes increases but the mix still contains petty crime, SSP is still in business.

One commonly accepted description suggests escalation is, “the tendency for offenders to move to more serious offence types as offending continues” (Blumstein et al. 1986, p. 8). Loeber and Le Blanc (1990) suggest that there are many ways that quantitative changes (e.g. degree, direction and velocity) and qualitative changes (e.g. conservation and paths) in offending can be shown above and beyond mere escalation. They criticize the ‘offending cycle’ as being too narrowly preoccupied with the increasing seriousness of the offence and the tendency for offenders to modify their offending both quantitatively and qualitatively as they continue to offend throughout their career. Offenders can and do ‘de-escalate’ their offending, through choice, lack of opportunity, incarceration and so on—this can be in frequency or in seriousness. Le Blanc and Frechette (1989) propose a definition of escalation which is less focused on seriousness, instead, “the movement on a sequence of diverse forms of delinquent activities” (cited in Le Blanc 2002, p. 102). This definition affords more support to the premise that serious offenders commit routine minor offences, the alternative being preposterous: that those offenders who ‘graduate’ to serious offending only commit serious offences thereafter. Escalation, therefore, should not be considered the only way of characterizing an offending cycle. It is more instructive to think of a triangular distribution, with high seriousness offences more often being associated with a range of offences of lesser seriousness.

Gateway offences are those which presage future criminality.

Another way of achieving the same objective is to identify those offences whose appearance early on in a criminal career indicate that the future delinquent career will be extensive. (Svensson 2002, p. 395)

The relevance for SSP is twofold. First, if the gateway offences are minor, then they can be used as SSP trigger offences. If they are not minor, but there are minor offences which often go together with strategic offences, then these minor offences may act as trigger offences. At this point we are looking well beyond current knowledge, but some candidates as gateway offences may be mentioned, as a first step in the process of operationalization in SSP work. Offence types identified as potential gateway offences are vehicle theft, drug offences, theft, robbery, fraud and other motoring offences.

More than 40 % of those with a second offence of vehicle theft and roughly a third of those with robbery followed the chronic offending career path. Although generally the probability that a person with a first conviction of 'other motoring offence' would become a chronic offender was considerably lower, the same offender after a second (or third) motoring offence conviction was more likely to become a chronic offender (Svensson 2002, p. 402). The cumulative number of 'other motoring convictions' appear to be more predictive of a criminal career than the offence type per se. This was also found in a study of drivers issued with Fixed Penalty Notices conducted by Wellsmith and Guille (2005).

In relation to SSP the significance of the findings of Svensson (2002) is great. First, his study provides general support for the claim that the most persistent (often the most serious) of offenders are crime versatile as opposed to homogeneous in their offending. Second, more specifically, it illustrates the possibility that some offence types (in this case at first offence) are more indicative of serious and chronic offending than others—that is they are better predictors of further offending. The crucial difference between Svensson's approach and the SSP approach taken by the present thesis is one of tense. The former endeavours to identify strategic offence types to predict future chronic and serious offenders, the latter to identify concurrent chronic and serious offenders from minor strategic 'trigger' offences.

An additional approach to understanding and preventing offending behaviour (which has been adopted by UK police and has been the life's work of one of us) is that of repeat victimization.

3.1 Repeat Victimization

In this review of the literature so far, two groups of explanations for criminal behaviour have been discussed which focus on the individual (dispositional factors) and those which focus on the environment and situation in which crime occurs. There is, however, an additional perspective which focuses on the victims of crime, particularly those who have been so on multiple occasions.

Research on crime victimization by Farrell and Pease (1993) found that in England and Wales, 4 % of the population suffer 44 % of crime committed. This indicates that crime victimization is far from proportionate, indeed it is highly disproportionate, a small number of people being repeatedly victimized. It appears that whether one becomes a victim of crime or not, has little to do with pure chance or random 'bad luck'. Ainsworth (2001) suggests there are a number of identifiable characteristics which make some more likely victims than others, some being more obvious. For example, where victims of domestic violence remain living with a violent partner, the chance of repeat victimization is a readily identifiable high risk situation. Much repeat victimization research has focused on burglary, explaining why some residences are frequently targeted where others are not. A house may be repeatedly targeted for a variety of reasons. Research by Bennett (1995) found that if a house is targeted repeatedly it may be because it almost gives off signals inviting intrusion; referred to as the *flag* explanation (Pease 1998). These signals obviously need to be removed so the house is perceived to be a more formidable challenge by those thinking of burgling it.

Thus a house which was originally selected as a target because it had poor locks and was left unoccupied for long periods of time may become a much less attractive target if better locks are fitted, an alarm installed and a new occupant with a large dog moves in. (Ainsworth 2001, p. 56)

Pease (1998) suggests that a first offence educates the offender, serving to *boost* the chance of repeat victimization because of additional familiarity with the layout of the house (e.g. entrance and exit points), the likely rewards available, and confidence because they 'got away with it'

last time. Flag explanations of repeat victimization, therefore, focus on the environment and situation (dwelling in the case of burglary), where boost explanations focus on the offender.

Knowledge of repeat victimization facilitates more targeted crime prevention. If police and victims know who is likely to become a victim in the future, 'scattergun' initiatives, with little prospect of success, are minimized. This has led to a more predictive crime approach, especially for burglaries (e.g. Johnson et al. 2007). Is repeat victimization simply about identifying victims or can it also help identify active serious offenders?

Evidence suggests that those committing crimes against the same target are primarily the same offenders. A second offence against the same target is overwhelmingly committed by the same offender who committed the first (e.g. see Ashton et al. 1998). More support is provided by Matthews et al. (2001) who found that such offenders tended to be the most prolific of criminals, with some perpetrating the same crime against the same victim dozens of times, for example, perpetrators of domestic violence and some 'career burglars'. Those who commit repeat offences, therefore, are likely to be the most prolific and serious type of offender where understanding and utilizing knowledge of repeat victims allow police to better interpret patterns of crime and apprehend the most prolific perpetrators (Pease 1998; Everson 2003). Everson and Pease (2001) suggest that the research on repeat victimization offers opportunities for the detection of crime and the targeting of active serious offenders. Wim Bernasco's important research tends to the same conclusion (Bernasco 2008).

If repeat victimization against the same targets by the same person (or group) is indeed the work of prolific offenders as suggested, then it follows that by identifying repeat victims police stand an increased chance of detecting prolific and serious offenders. By selecting the same victims and targets, prolific and serious offenders are drawing attention to themselves. Indeed they are self-selecting themselves for enhanced police scrutiny.

4 And Finally

Roger Tarling's work on criminal careers has been mentioned before and is excellent in its carefulness and relevance. In Table 3.1, we have no way of knowing whether the versatility is horizontal or vertical or both (most likely it is both). It is included because its sample was drawn from those who were tried at least once at Crown Court, so at least once committed an offence of some seriousness. The rows indicate an offence type and the columns the type of offence for which they were next convicted. So it will be seen that those convicted of violence (including robbery) had a next offence which was also violent 26 % of the time. Their next conviction was burglary 19 % of the time and theft or fraud 30 % of the time. Miscellaneous other offences accounted for 24 % of the next convictions.

The apparently greater degree of specialization among burglars will be considered alongside the Schneider research discussed later in Chap. 4 that burglary and shop theft are often committed by the same person, shop theft being less often officially processed.

Table 3.1 Probability of sequences of offence types in those with a Crown Court index offence

Offence type	Violence%	Sex%	Burglary%	Theft%	Other%
Violence	26	2	19	30	24
Sex	7	25	19	38	12
Burglary	8	1	13	34	14
Theft	10	2	27	45	16
Other	14	1	21	35	29

Modified from Tarling (1993)

Rows represent kth offence type, columns k+1th offence type

5 Chapter Summary

Having hopefully now firmly planted the theoretical and empirical support for the two main premises of SSP (viewing serious offenders as crime versatile as opposed to specialized and likely to commit little as well as big bad things) in the mind of the reader, to continue momentum we must now move on to more practical demonstrations of SSP in action. This is the purpose of the next chapter. Although currently few in number, we begin the chapter with some ‘headline-grabbing’ examples of notorious offenders uncovered by dint of their committing a minor offence, before progressing to more empirically grounded dedicated SSP case studies.

Chapter 3 endnote—Methodological and practical issues associated with calculating offence specialization in criminal careers (based on Fisher and Ross 2006, p. 154).

1. **Data sources used to represent offending**—Most studies of criminal careers use ‘officially’ recorded data (e.g. by police and courts); the problems with taking such accurate representations of offending patterns are well documented elsewhere (e.g. Burrows et al. 2000; Kazemian and Farrington 2006). These include the fact that not all crime is first reported, second recorded and third detected. Also, how the elements of a criminal incident are officially recorded depends on interpretations placed on them by individual police officers and victims (e.g. the difference between aggravated and non-aggravated burglary, and between criminal damage to a dwelling and attempted burglary). In sum, criminal career research finds itself in the same predicament which besets much criminological research; just how representative are any findings extracted from the problematic large-scale data sets available?
2. **Offence classifications**—How offences are classified has an obvious effect. Violence, for example, is a commonplace category in criminal career research and is used to represent a whole host of different offences such as murder, robbery or sexual assault; mistakenly considered similar

enough to class the criminal career to which they hail as 'specialized'. The degree of generality of classification influences the degree of specialization attributed to an individual criminal career. The number of categories used is also important especially where rarer offences are 'lumped' together in order to make a total number of working categories more manageable. Violence should not, by any means, be considered the only 'bucket' crime category as minor offences, as we shall see, are often treated in an even less discriminating way, categorized at best as 'sundry offences' and at worst as simply 'other' offences.

3. **The categorization of mixed offending episodes**—In order to be able to make comparisons across offending episodes it is a requirement, for most criminal career analysis, that each is represented by a single offence category (e.g. burglary, robbery or violence). This is problematic when an event comprises several offences. One accepted method (e.g. by Farrington et al. 1988 and in Home Office crime recording conventions) is to categorize an episode according to the 'most serious offence' committed (MSO method), where each offence within a classification is given a 'seriousness ranking'—the highest ranked (most serious) offence chosen in a multi-offence episode. The most obvious problem with this approach is in representing mixed offending episodes with a single offence category (or code); it oversimplifies the episode itself, resulting in, as Lattimore et al. (1994) suggest, ignoring the fact it might be evidence of versatility in the first place, thus overstating specialization. The reverse is equally possible, for example, if our offender in episode one commits violence and drug offences, and then in episode two commits drug and property offences, then the MSO (taking the most serious offence) method would overstate offence versatility. It is perhaps more plausible, however, if we view our offender as a drug offence specialist, with the other offences (i.e. violence and property) more suitably viewed as by-products of drug offending. On balance, however, in the light of the available literature, the writer takes the view that offence specialization identified in criminal career research is over-represented at the expense of versatility.

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4

Self-Selection Policing and Serious Offenders

1 Introduction

We hope to have cemented the idea of SSP into the minds of the reader. We sought to do this by appraising current investigative approaches to identifying offenders (those who commit serious crimes in particular). We presented the supporting theoretical underpinnings for SSP, and briefly examined the evidence for criminal versatility (vertical and horizontal) as a necessary condition for SSP viability. This done, we confess that it remains an additional investigative approach in theory only, though we strongly suspect that individual innovative police officers will have thought and acted along similar lines.

In this chapter we present a brief synopsis of the handful of SSP-like (not always badged as such) studies that can be found in the research literature over the past ten years. This chapter is intended to serve as a stock-take of SSP examples before we move on to chapters based on our more recent work and offer advice on how to set up local SSP trials and studies. Let's start with the most seductive of SSP examples.

2 Self-Selection Policing and the Most Serious of Serious Offenders

The most sensational demonstration of the vertical versatility of serious offenders occurs where notorious repeat killers and rapists have been brought to justice, not as a direct result of long and protracted high-profile police investigations, but because they have come under the spotlight by dint of their commission of more mundane offences. A famous historical English example, concerns the notorious eighteenth-century highwayman (armed robber) Richard ‘Dick’ Turpin. He was wanted for a string of crimes including several murders. Turpin was apprehended and imprisoned for the lesser offence of stealing a horse, but the authorities were not aware of their prisoner’s true identity for several weeks. When they finally realized he was the infamous Turpin, he was tried and hanged for the murders he had committed.

Serial murderer Peter Sutcliffe (aka the Yorkshire Ripper), murderer of at least 13 women in Northern England between 1975 and 1980, was identified because a vigilant police officer decided to run a number plate check on a car parked in a well-known ‘red-light’ area of Sheffield (a city in Yorkshire). This revealed that the number plates on his car came from a different vehicle. He was subsequently arrested and taken to a local police station. While being questioned by the ‘Ripper squad’ the vigilant officer thought it strange that Sutcliffe had asked to be allowed to urinate at the place where he was originally stopped and before getting into the police car (the station being a matter of minutes away). The police officer returned to the scene. Where Sutcliffe had supposedly urinated the officer found the knife and the ball-pein hammer used to kill his victims. Confronted with the evidence, Sutcliffe confessed. Ironically, although presumably he had committed the more minor offence of displaying false plates on his car in order to maintain his anonymity from the manhunt launched to identify him, it was this minor offence which led to his eventual identification as a serial murderer.

There are numerous other examples of notorious killers and other serious criminals being identified by dint of the minor offences they have committed. Had they not been caught committing a minor routine

offence, all would have remained at large longer or possibly indefinitely, with consequent further loss of life. Here are a few more examples.

- US convicted killer Charles Manson was arrested after police visited his house on suspicion of criminal damage offences.
- The US serial killer ‘Son of Sam’ David Berkowitz was arrested after a parking ticket put him near the scene of one of his crimes.
- US multiple killer Daniel Rifkin, when stopped for a minor traffic violation, had the body of his thirteenth victim in the boot of his car.
- Wanted by the FBI, US cult leader Warren Jeffs was arrested when a police stopped the car he was travelling in for not displaying the necessary State plate. He was only the passenger.

Some might simply dismiss such examples as instances of nothing more than coincidence, or perhaps just ‘bad luck’ on the part of the serious offender. But to be detected for the commission of a minor crime, one has to have committed it in the first place. What’s luck got to do with it (as Tina Turner almost sang)? Luck only comes into play with the non-use of SSP when it favours the serious offender.

The psychology behind these cases seems simple. If you are prepared to go a long way out of line, less far is not a problem. Rule-breaking becomes a way of life. The career gangster in his autobiography (Foreman 2007) excuses forcing sexual encounters on a young woman as follows: “Her protests were never meant to carry much weight” (p. 43). While well embarked on a serious criminal career involving cars and lorries: “Driving licences were provided by a friend in County Hall” (p. 44). “We used to nick anything and everything” (p. 45). Finally, and with apologies to Irish people for the slur, we read about a doctor who patched up injured members of Foreman’s ‘firm’: “Fred was a very trustworthy man and – being an Irishman – the authorities didn’t matter to him” (p. 170).

Some crime fiction writers have recognized the intuitiveness of SSP by often demonstrating an awareness of how commission of minor offences can lead to the undoing of active, serious offenders. In what is arguably her most famous novel, *The Wire in the Blood*, Val McDermid as far back as 1997 wrote

Criminals are often caught by accident. He knew that: he'd seen programmes about it on the TV. Dennis Nilsen, killer of fifteen homeless young men, found out because human flesh blocked the drains; Peter Sutcliffe, the Yorkshire Ripper, despatcher of thirteen women, nicked because he'd stolen a set of number plates to disguise his car; Ted Bundy, necrophiliac murderer of as many as forty young women, finally arrested for speeding past a police car at night with no lights'. (1997, p. 63)

Box 4.1 asks why such instances are important.

Box 4.1 Think About It: So What If a Handful of Serial Murderers Have Been Caught Committing Minor Offences. What Does That Prove?

Such real and fictional examples are important for two main reasons. First, they show that it is common knowledge that some of the world's most notorious offenders have been uncovered by minor infractions of the law, and as such they demonstrate the intuitiveness of SSP.

Second, they expose those who choose to frame such events as attributable to the amazing 'bad' or 'dumb' luck of the notorious offender. Attitudes can only be modified if one knows who holds them. SSP necessitates a change of perception of such events from one of bad luck or 'accidents', to one of opportunities for uncovering more active serious offenders, through the practical application of SSP. This book aims to take a tentative step towards this objective.

As we bid farewell to the link between SSP and serial murder, SSP is not limited to identifying active serious offenders during the commission of their crimes. Here we are in territory familiar to mainstream policing. Having committed a murder for gain, that gain must be realized by what are by definition less serious crimes. For example, serial killers Charles Chitat Ng and accomplice Leonard Lok were uncovered as a consequence of a shop-theft with a victim's credit-card.¹ Andrew Cunanan, the killer of fashion designer Gianni Versace, was identified when he tried to pawn his famous victim's jewellery.² This is a no-brainer, we hear you object. It is. The question is, at which minor crimes does one look to identify traces of the realization of profit after murder or a massively profitable

¹ Found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Ng (accessed 6 January 2016).

² Ibid.

robbery? There are already impressive policing skills in forensic accounting and open source cyber intelligence. We simply want you to take two ideas away at this point. First, the fact of realizing profit from major crime is itself an example of the vertical versatility on which SSP is based. Second, there is still an imperfect understanding of what Derek Cornish (1994) refers to as the different scenes and scripts within a crime event including, for example, the different stages in the planning, execution and exit from a crime event and the different scenes and scripts contained within them (e.g. paying an informer for information when a bank is getting a large cash delivery; stealing a car to travel to the bank (the scene of the crime); breaking into the bank; escaping by car using a familiar route; laundering the proceeds of major robberies and complex frauds).

Simple examples of scripts include Sutcliffe apprehended using a minor offence (displaying false number plates) to facilitate his serious offending, and Chitat Ng and Lok caught committing a minor offence (using a stolen credit card) after their crime. The relevant distinctions are as follows.

- minor crimes in preparation of major crime
- minor crimes used to identify those with a higher probability of concurrent serious criminality
- minor crimes consequential on major crimes.

In the next section exploring the existing research on SSP, the ‘dumb luck’ approach is exposed as being at best naïve and at worst deeply misplaced.

3 Self-Selection Policing Research: A More Pragmatic Empirical Beginning

Although generally not badged as such, there are a few early examples of offender SSP that can be extracted from the literature. In a seminal study, Kelling and Coles (1995) discovered that a substantial minority of ‘squeegee merchants’³ in New York also had outstanding warrants for felony offences,

³Squeegee merchant refers to those individuals who undertake unsolicited cleaning of drivers’ car windscreens while at traffic lights and in traffic jams.

Thus, when an officer served a DAT⁴ for squeegeeing and the offender did not appear, that officer could make an immediate arrest, and jail time would follow. With punishment swift and certain, squeegeeing died out in a matter of weeks. (Kelling and Coles 1995, p. 143)

The New York Transit Police found that by targeting individuals who jumped ticket turnstiles to avoid paying a general drop in crime in the subway and trains occurred. The fall in crime was attributed to fare evaders also being those which committed many other offences (Maple 1999). Turnstile jumpers therefore were self-selecting as likely candidates for more serious types of criminality. It is of great interest that this approach came to be badged as zero tolerance policing when at its heart it was SSP. To emphasize the crucial point, the squeegee merchants were not targeted primarily to wipe out the practice of pushy squeegeeing but because squeegee merchants did more serious stuff too.

One early piece of UK based research, which demonstrated the promise of the SSP approach for uncovering serious criminality, stems from a local study of illegal parking in disabled bays. The findings suggested that one in five who had committed the minor offence, had outstanding warrants for the arrest of the registered keeper of the vehicle, or other characteristics which would have excited immediate police attention, when compared with 2 % for legally parked adjacent cars (Chenery et al. 1999). This incredibly annoying, but somewhat minor criminal behaviour, of illegally parking in disabled bays (when others nearby are available for use) was identified in this study as an indicator of active criminality. Taking spaces reserved for disabled people is intrinsically disgusting and is a perfect example of an unobtrusive tactic. If the vehicles are checked against the relevant police and other databases by, for example, a traffic enforcement officer, the false positives (i.e. those people who were not of immediate police interest) would never know they were false positives. This is important in preventing SSP being seen as excessive intrusion in people's lives.

Another study found an identifiable link between shoplifting and burglary, concluding shop theft played a pivotal role in the offending

⁴Desk Appearance Ticket—usually entailing an appearance at a police station to pay a fine.

patterns of prolific burglars (Schneider 2005). Interviews conducted with 50 prolific burglars revealed that 44 (88 %) admitted to committing shop theft. Of these 26 did so daily and a further eight did so ‘several times a week’. Only six burglars claimed they had never stolen from shops. Shop theft provides a more modest but reliable profit (for example, by selling on large jars of coffee to dodgy shopkeepers). Burglary yields less predictable but larger profits, however, with a less straightforward way of converting what is stolen into cash.

Historically, the relationship between these offences within an individual’s criminal career has not been focused upon. Schneider suggests that this is due to shoplifting being considered a far less serious crime than burglary, more the province of juveniles, opportunists, drug users and those with mental health problems. As such, shoplifting is regarded of lower status than burglary amongst criminals (Schneider 2005). In a more recent unpublished study, Sylvia Chenery found burglars to be outwardly contemptuous of shop theft as beneath them. One suspects it was nonetheless a way of keeping the wolf from the door (or the smack in the pocket) during the lean times for the hard-working burglar.

The police and the law consider shop theft a more minor crime than burglary and this is reflected in police structure. For example, robbery, violence and burglary crimes have dedicated teams or squads, but few as yet are known to the writers to be dedicated to shop theft (a point revisited in Chap. 7, focusing on barriers to the implementation and practice of SSP). The identification of a definite link between shop theft and burglary, as burglars are likely to engage in shoplifting more than burglary, leads Schneider to advise

“that shop thieves be policed as though they were burglars on their day off rather than shop thieves pure and simple” (2005, p. 3).

This research has several important implications for the SSP approach. It provides added support, first to the perception of the vertically versatile offender, second to the notion that serious offenders will not baulk at minor offences (both issues were introduced in Chap. 3) and third, that a considered minor offence such as shoplifting may be indicative of active serious criminality, such as burglary (the focus of the remainder of the book!).

Schneider's study suggests that those who commit burglary self-select for increased police scrutiny by virtue of committing, more frequently, shop theft. Increased scrutiny of the lives of these offenders should pay dividends in identifying many as burglars (e.g. visiting their houses may reveal the spoils of local burglaries). By increased scrutiny we are not advocating the removal of police discretion as to whether to process formally those who commit minor offences. We do suggest, however, that they are at least checked out. The findings of the Schneider study highlight shop theft as a trigger offence for identifying possible burglars and in practice shop theft is an easier crime to detect (Schneider 2005).

The link between motoring offences and serious criminality is well documented. Indeed, we devote two chapters of this book to exploring which of the wide range of driving offences have the strongest links with serious criminality. A brief discussion, therefore, of the extant literature on this supposed link is prudent at this point, to bring the reader up to speed (sorry).

4 Driving Offences and Serious Offenders?

T.C. Willett's 1964 book *Criminal on the Road* was one of the first to focus on those who commit traffic offences, but Gerry Rose (2000) was the first to focus specifically on the criminal histories of serious traffic offenders. Rose explored the notion that those committing such offences were no more criminal than the average motorist, which had been the finding of a small study conducted by Steer and Carr-Hill (1967). This entailed investigation of the nature of serious traffic offending and the extent to which it is "interwoven with mainstream criminal offending" (Rose 2000, p. 67).

In the important Rose study (which to our knowledge hasn't been replicated in over 15 years) serious traffic offenders were divided into three groups; drink drivers, disqualified drivers and dangerous drivers, based on current convictions and incidents. As a group, serious traffic offenders were found to share the age profiles of dangerous drivers and disqualified drivers similar to those of more mainstream offenders with 60–75 % aged between 18 and 32 years, although those in the drink-driver category

were found to be older (Rose 2000). Those in lower social groups were more likely to commit licence and insurance offences. Risk factors such as family, schooling and peer groups were found to correlate with serious traffic offences in ways which mirrored mainstream offending (Rose 2000). With regard to the crime versatility of serious offenders, Rose concludes:

An important point about a serious traffic offender profile, however, is the level of non-specialization of offence types – those repeatedly committing serious traffic offences are likely to commit mainstream offences as well. The evidence shows that serious traffic offenders cannot be thought of as otherwise law-abiding members of the public. (2000, p. 68)

If Steer and Carr-Hill's finding in 1967 was correct, that serious traffic offenders were no more criminal than the average motorist, this was not the case from Rose's study in 2000 as they were far more criminal. That said, in the intervening 25 years or so between both studies, areas of consistency were found, for example, with Steer and Carr-Hill's (1967) distinction between 'dishonest offenders' and 'driving offenders'. The 'dishonest' group was found to include disqualified drivers and those driving without a licence or insurance. The latter offence is revealed as most closely linked to mainstream criminality in the findings of a simultaneous interview study (Rose 2000). However, Rose (2000) found that Steer and Carr-Hill's (1967) 'driving offenders' are not simply 'unlucky' members of the public, but are more likely to be also serious mainstream offenders. For example, drink drivers were estimated twice as likely to have criminal records, than members of the wider population. Dangerous and reckless drivers were more likely to be involved in concurrent criminality, especially car theft.

Suggs (1998) showed that the motoring offenders were far from being 'crime specialists', but had convictions for serious mainstream offences such as, theft (75 %), burglary (60 %) and violence against the person (30 %). Reconvictions (over a two-year period) commonly included non-motoring offences such as theft (39 %), burglary (25 %) and violence against the person (15 %). In a study of offenders that drive without motor insurance, 'Kevin', a principal focus of the case-study research, was

arrested for an incident of robbery soon after being interviewed by the authors (Smerdon and South 1997).

The promise that the SSP approach holds for driving offences has been neatly summed up by police as follows: “most drivers are not criminals but most criminals are drivers” (West Midlands Traffic Division 1997). The Rose (2000) study focused on serious road traffic offenders and Chenery et al. (1999) demonstrated the utility of checking the criminal histories of individuals parking illegally in disabled bays. But what of other relatively minor driving offences?

Rose (2000) suggests that an analysis of the criminal careers of minor traffic offenders could provide information regarding links with both mainstream and serious road traffic offending, with the most likely connections with traffic offences being those involving dishonesty. Wellsmith and Guille (2005) assessed the suitability of parking fixed penalty notices (FPN) as indicative of concurrent criminality. Recorded single offences were found to be unreliable indicators of serious offending, however, repeat FPN offences, were modestly associated with concurrent criminality relative to a random group selected from an electoral roll.

The Wellsmith and Guille study experienced several problems which probably contributed to a relatively unspectacular result. For example, more than half the notices issued were not associated with a named individual (i.e. no registered keeper of vehicle). These were presumably ‘pool cars’ relatively common in high crime areas. Also they concentrated on individual offending up to 12 months after the FPN and in this time some would have desisted from more serious offending. The authors conclude that more traffic offence centred research is necessary in order fully to explore the link between minor offences and serious criminality and to exploit the SSP approach,

Despite the results of this study, which are readily qualified by the problems encountered, the previous research and common sense indicate that low level offending will be indicative of more serious offending, therefore the second explanation, that all traffic offences are not suitable self-selection targets is unlikely. (Wellsmith and Guille 2005, p. 76)

Townsley and Pease (2003) attempted to execute SSP by 'Operation Safeguard'. In collaboration with Merseyside Police, the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (UK) (DVLA) and a local taxi association, a vehicle inspection programme was introduced where over the course of a four-hour period on a selected day, any driver seen not wearing a seatbelt would be pulled over. Where the 'non-use of seatbelt' self-selection trigger was used for private vehicles ($n=62$), 3 % of drivers were immediately arrested, 14.5 % were found to have committed a Vehicle Excise Licence offence (VEL) and 11 % were issued a dangerous 'unroadworthy vehicle' prohibition notice. A staggering 50 % of taxis (and private hire cars) stopped during the operation were issued with vehicle defect and stop notices, where the licensed for private hire plate was removed until such time as the vehicle was deemed 'roadworthy'.

By way of comparison, an operation was conducted, that did not deploy the non-use of seatbelt self-selection trigger, where officers stopped all vehicles of a specific age, at a specific time of day (selected for likelihood of theft). Those found offending amounted to approximately 5 %, demonstrating that the non-use of seat-belt trigger had a much greater hit rate than random stop checks by at least a factor of ten (Townsley and Pease 2003).

In a more recent SSP study, Townsley et al. (2006) looked at DNA matches relating to detected homicides and sexual assaults and identified a link between these as a second offence, and drugs possession and dealing as a first, thus providing more evidence that serious offenders perpetrate minor offences.

Let us rehearse the argument thus far. Research has shown that using offender SSP can identify active serious offenders at a greater hit rate than picking individuals randomly (Maple 1999; Chenery et al. 1999). The principle, as established so far in this chapter, is that career criminals commit a wide spectrum of offences that range in both seriousness and frequency. By focusing attention on those who frequently commit common minor offences, then attention is also placed on those who engage in active serious criminality. Some specific minor offences, which if discerned from all those possible, could be used to uncover them. The beauty of SSP is that, by dint of the commission of a minor offence, the offender makes him or herself justifiably eligible for official police attention.

Although only introduced here (but expanded upon in later chapters) to be accepted by police as a complementary method for identifying active serious offenders, certain conditions must be met which make the adoption of SSP attractive (Wellsmith and Guille 2005, p. 41)

- Police enforcement attention is distributed according to the acceptance of opportunities to commit minor crimes or infraction of regulations
- The minor crime or infraction of regulations shall be known as the trigger
- Triggers shall be chosen according to three criteria:
 - their acceptability in themselves for police attention
 - their empirical association with concurrent and/or future criminality
 - their unobtrusiveness in use, since the majority of those targeted will not be active serious criminals.

These conditions are explored throughout the next few chapters, but with particular focus on what we consider to be current barriers to SSP thinking and practice and how SSP can be easily incorporated into contemporary policing in Chap. 7.

5 Chapter Summary

A range of high-profile serial murder cases were briefly introduced by means of demonstrating how serious offenders (including serial murderers) have and could have been identified by the minor offences that they committed: SSP at its most sensational. The chapter concluded with an exploration of a handful of case examples which could easily be placed underneath the SSP umbrella.

In the next few chapters we present several research studies deliberately designed with SSP in mind. We begin at a beginning of sorts, with a small fishing expedition to identify which types of minor offences active serious criminals are most likely to commit.

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5

Going Fishing: Searching for Self-Selection Policing Trigger Offences Committed by Visitors to a Prison

1 Introduction

With the theoretical and emergent research base now (hopefully) established, the next two chapters focus on identifying triggers for SSP. They are in no sense tablets from the academic mountain (which as readers will have noticed is a mere hillock when it comes to the approach advocated here).

The present chapter reports a dedicated study of minor offending conducted several years ago, which explored offences perpetrated by visitors to a Young Offenders Institute (juvenile prison) in the North of England. From a SSP perspective, what was of primary interest was offences committed by visitors either whilst en route to or having arrived at a penal institution. Our thinking here was simple; if we could identify which minor offences are committed most by a sample of prison visitors, then

A brief (yet related) version of this chapter was published as, Roach, J. (2007) Those who do big bad things also usually do little bad things: Identifying active serious offenders using offender self-selection, *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, Vol. 9, (1) pp. 66–79.

we could go on to test whether these trigger offences could be generalized to the wider population of serious offenders. Why visitors to a prison hear you scream? Let us confess that we would not have started here had we been starting afresh today.

One's first reaction to that notion of targeting people who visit relations, friends and acquaintances resident in penal institutions, is probably that it is unfair, unjustifiable, and has little to do with SSP as it is clearly not against the law to visit people in prison. Although this is no doubt true, the method in our madness was more thought out than might seem at first glance. The decision to target visitors to penal institutions was based on careful consideration of police intelligence, knowledge of offending patterns, and of course relevant criminological theory (as presented in Chap. 2).

First, after numerous conversations with police and prison staff, we became aware of a common perception that those who visit prisoners are often themselves active offenders. Despite this belief of people on the ground, we found little mention of this, let alone substantive evidence, in the extant criminological and police literature. Nevertheless, those believing themselves to be 'in the know' convinced us that a focus on visitors to prisons would quite probably also be one on active serious offenders. If art does indeed imitate life, then in films villains always visit their villainous colleagues in prison, for one reason or another.

Second, the hypothesis that a significant number of visitors to penal institutions will offend en route to or whilst visiting, had some theoretical support, especially from Routine Activities Theory (Cohen and Felson 1979b) which suggests that a majority of offenders will commit crimes as opportunities to do so present themselves. The desire (or need) to visit a friend or associate in prison, for example, is easily incorporated into everyday routine activities for some. In a radio interview recently, a member of the Government remarked that the problem used to be stopping people getting out, but it was now primarily stopping stuff getting in. This may be a somewhat naïve characterization of the situation, since in our experience stopping stuff getting in has always had high priority. Incidental opportunities for crime also present themselves. For example, for some, the opportunity that an unlocked car presents, stumbled upon on the way to a train station, or continuing to drive without

the appropriate licence or insurance will prove too tempting to resist, particularly when faced with the alternative of an expensive rail journey, perhaps punctuated by several bus trips, to visit a prisoner friend for just a few hours (penal institutions are often built in remote locations). This is also consistent with psychological theories of moral disengagement (Bandura and Walters 1963; Bandura 1977) which suggest offenders are able to ignore moral social codes at given times (e.g. 'You've got to do what it takes to visit your mate in prison'), offender neutralization theory (Sykes and Matza 1957) (e.g. 'It wasn't me who put the prison in the middle of nowhere') and Rational Choice Theory (Cornish and Clarke 1986b, 2006, 2008b), which states that the vast majority of offenders should be regarded as rational calculators of risk and reward, acting to minimize the risks, whilst simultaneously maximizing the rewards (e.g. 'I'll get there quicker and the chances of me getting caught for not having a licence are small'). The financial rewards for supplying a prisoner with drugs, or the personal pleasure of seeing an old colleague 'inside', might be perceived as greater than the relatively minor risk of being caught in a stolen car or without appropriate motor insurance etc.

Last (and arguably most important) we were very helpfully directed to an existing police operation in the North of England, that from stop and search operations on visitors to a Young Offenders Institute (YOI hereafter) had found that a high number of visitors were caught offending while visiting inmates. These offences mainly came to light by use of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition System (referred to as ANPR hereafter)¹ and by way of physical searches of visitors. When checked for, a significant percentage of visitors stopped were found to feature on the Police National Computer (PNC hereafter) for prior offences, including some serious crimes. Unfortunately, the YOI operations had never been evaluated, but the officer in charge estimated that on average at least ten visitors had been caught committing offences, ranging from minor

¹ As a vehicle passes through an ANPR camera, it takes an image of the number plate. Those details are then fed into a system which checks them against sources such as the Police National Computer (PNC), Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), Local Force Intelligence systems and motor insurers databases. If the number plate is matched to one of the sources, the ANPR equipment will sound an alert. Source http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/news_info/departments/anpr/index.htm (accessed 22 November 2009).

offences such as not having the appropriate vehicle tax, to more serious crimes such as possession of stolen credit cards or intent to supply illicit drugs. Indeed, such operations had resulted in at least three arrests on each occasion.

Put simply, if visitors to prisons were (i) often known offenders (in terms of the PNC) and (ii) often committing offences while they were visiting the YOI, then this promised a fertile sample from which to develop SSP further by identifying those common minor offences committed by those found to be active serious offenders. Taking this into account, it did not take a leap of genius for us to surmise that these YOI operations should provide an excellent pond for us to fish for SSP trigger offences.

In 'piggy-backing' our SSP research onto operations which were being carried out anyway, it would also mean that our research would comply with a necessary requirement of SSP; that of 'justified' police scrutiny, as it is usual practice for visitors to prisons to be searched anyway. Those found offending would not be targeted simply because they were visitors, but because they had been detected committing an offence, either identified by the ANPR or by an individual police search. For those who might be contemplating staging such an operation at a prison near them, then the ethical and legal considerations can be summarized as follows:

- These operations were due to happen anyway.
- The principle of blanket targeting visitors to prisons is not necessarily endorsed by us except as a response to those institutions presenting problems.
- Insofar as minor offending is associated with concurrent major offending there would be no need or justification for blanket targeting of prison visitors.

To rehearse the argument, it was decided that a focus on visitors to prison could provide a platform from which to explore trigger offences for SSP, including more detailed questions regarding the nature and extent of the crime versatile serious offender, such as whether some visitors offend en route to penal establishments, and if so what kind of minor infractions of the law they commit. This was important because if it transpired that a substantial number of offenders were found to commit

specific minor offences en route to (or whilst at) penal institutions, then such minor offences may be generalizable as SSP ‘triggers’, usable in the identification of serious offenders in the wider environment. We thought that persuading police to conduct such operations in a more systematic and SSP-tweaked way was the way forward. The police involved were only too happy to help, with one stating bluntly that the benefit of doing this whole thing was ‘a bit of a no-brainer’. It was in this context that *Operation Visitor* was conceived.

2 Operation Visitor

We hope that the operations are described in sufficient detail for those contemplating replication, but if we’ve missed something please don’t hesitate to contact us.²

2.1 The Aims

The police objectives for Operation Visitor could be mapped onto those of our SSP fishing trip, but with a different emphasis in places. Both are presented in Table 5.1.

2.1.1 The Logistics

It was agreed at the planning stage that Operation Visitor would be conducted on a monthly basis, over a 12-month period, and would be staffed with a substantial group of officers and specific resources, such as control room staff and an ANPR mobile unit. The dates of the operations are presented in Table 5.2 along with the number of visitors and vehicles subjected to the checks and searches which were part of each operation.

Prior to each individual operation, the consent and co-operation of the Divisional (Basic Command Unit) Commander and the Governor of the Young Offender Institute were obtained. Over a 12-month period (April to March) a total of ten police operations were conducted at the YOI.

²j.roach@hud.ac.uk

Table 5.1 Operation Visitor: a marriage made in heaven

Police objectives	SSP objectives
To target criminals visiting the YOI and detect and prevent crime being committed by them	To provide an empirical test of whether significant numbers of prison visitors are either active or past offenders and to explore the diversity and severity of their offending. If substantiated, this would elevate the 'offenders visiting prisoners' hypothesis from a police given to empirical criminological knowledge.
To prevent contraband products and substances from being taken into the YOI	In this scenario prisons can be seen as ' <i>crime attractors</i> ' attracting offenders to offend en route, or whilst at the establishments themselves. If so, then an opportunity to work in partnership with police and YOI authorities will be taken to reduce the occurrence of visitor offending, particularly with regard to the smuggling of drugs into prison.
To identify those road traffic offences committed by visitors to the YOI	To provide testing of a second hypothesis that, since many prisons are located in remote and inaccessible places, a significant number of prison visitors will find the temptation to arrive there via illegal means too great to resist (e.g. stolen cars, no insurance, no tax etc.)
To deter criminals from visiting the YOI and becoming familiar with the area	
To collect sufficient data to determine whether the YOI acts as a <i>crime attractor</i>	

As can be seen, most were conducted on one day per calendar month (excluding Wednesdays when visiting was not permitted, and Sundays) between the hours of 12.30 and 15.30 (coincident with YOI visiting hours). In practice it proved difficult to run one operation each calendar month due to unforeseen demands on police time (e.g. a major murder inquiry was launched in one month) and bad weather (which was believed to deter visitors as well as make operations more difficult). Although often at the mercy of resourcing exigencies, comparison with visitor numbers and demographics provided by the YOI for the previous

Table 5.2 Operation Visitor: day and number of visitors and vehicles searched

Operation number	Day	Other factors for consideration	Number of vehicles stopped	Number of visitors searched
1	Monday		23	61
2	Tuesday	After a Bank Holiday	15	43
3	Thursday		21	60
4	Friday		18	57
5	Thursday		25	76
6	Thursday		24	75
7	Tuesday	Bad weather	20	58
8	Thursday		26	57
9	Thursday		22	60
10	Saturday		16	70
Total			210	617

year, indicated that a sufficiently representative sample of prison visitors was achieved, for our findings to be considered valid.

The date of each operation was agreed in advance and only shared with the Governor of the YOI, and not widely publicized, as it was anticipated that if operations became known to inmates, then they would pass them on to visitors, resulting in the better informed ‘villains’ keeping away or taking extra precautions. An additional consideration with regard to the dates of operations was that if it became public knowledge that only one operation was to be conducted per month, the more astute visitors would wait until a police operation had occurred in that calendar month before visiting, in the knowledge that they were ‘safe’ until the next month. This concern was soon allayed as it was found that the high prisoner churn (turnover) rate would serve to stop details of Operation Visitor scheduling from becoming common knowledge amongst inmates. The average stay at the YOI was just eight days during the 12 months of operations, as inmates were either released or moved on very quickly as a matter of procedure. It was hoped, therefore, that all police operations would hold the same element of surprise, since prisoners would not be at the YOI long enough to get wise to the operations or discern any patterns.

The Operation Visitor team consisted of approximately 16 officers, comprising a police sergeant, police constables and a team of specialist road safety officers to check the 'roadworthiness' of visitor vehicles. On the morning of each operation, a full briefing was given to the team by the operation leader, to ensure that each team member knew not only the overall objectives, but also his or her role within it. It was felt that by introducing compulsory briefings, the team would function a little more efficiently than previously.

During operations, all visiting vehicles passed the police ANPR as they approached the YOI along its driveway (the only route in) which alerted officers of any 'suspicious' vehicles and drivers. Regardless of whether an ANPR 'hit' occurred (whereby the PNC information relating to the car registration plate excited police attention) all drivers were directed to the YOI car park to have their documents and vehicles checked by the team. If the driver did not have relevant documents to hand (e.g. drivers licence, MOT certificate,³ driver's insurance) and these could not be determined at point of contact via the control room, then a Home Office Road Transport 1 (HO/RT1) form was issued, which gave the driver seven days to present the necessary documentation at a police station for verification.

All drivers and passengers were searched apart from those under 14 years of age (established by ID necessary to obtain visitor entry). The legality of this procedure was established by police solicitors at the operational planning stage and was considered compliant with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE hereafter), S. 8 of the Prison Act 1952, and the YOI rules of entry (Prison Rule 71/YOI rule 75) where it is a condition of entry to all penal institutions that visitors consent to being searched. If they decline it is prison policy to refuse entry. All visitors to prisons are made aware of the conditions of entry and should be prepared to be searched and to bring necessary documentation to prove identity (e.g. passport). They were not expecting to have their vehicles searched and examined for 'roadworthiness' (i.e. the ANPR unit could not be seen until the vehicle was on the private approach road) but this was also covered by PACE. Those visitors arriving

³Ministry of Transport certificate of roadworthiness.

by foot or by bus were physically searched in exactly the same way, affording a comparison of public transport users, pedestrians and those travelling in other vehicles.

The ANPR checked vehicle registrations for 'process offences' such as driving without road tax or motor insurance, as vehicles passed. Next, all visitor vehicles were subject to rigorous examination by road safety traffic officers to establish their condition with regard to safety. Driver details given were also checked by officers at the scene via communication with the central control room. All driver and passenger visitors were asked to produce appropriate visiting orders and suitable personal identification, both of which are necessary to gain entrance to the institution. Names and addresses were then, as practically possible, checked with the PNC and with the Constabulary intelligence system.

A note of caution should be raised here for those thinking of replicating Operation Visitor as several confounding factors were encountered. In total, over 70 % of visitors arrived at the YOI between 1300 and 1400 hours, overwhelming, on occasion, both officers' ability to PNC check every visitor and the ability of control room staff to deal with the concentrated demand for PNC and intelligence searches. To some extent some of the practicalities were ironed out from operation six onwards by the increasing of control staff, which led to a greater number of PNC histories being checked in operations six to ten than for operations one to five.

To facilitate a more systematic and efficient data collection, dedicated recording sheets were developed for police use in operations. At the planning stage, police officers highlighted the need for a visitor recording sheet that was both practical and easy to use (user friendly) and of minimum inconvenience to the public. A compromise was struck (after several draft examples) by which visitor data would be collected using the simple recording sheet and passed at the conclusion of each operation.⁴ Data collected represented all visitors and vehicles during operations and was stored on a secure network and was analysed by only us.

⁴Although we would have liked more visitor details recorded than actually were, pragmatism and compromise were called for with our kind police partners.

3 Findings

The results of Operation Visitor are presented below, with sample descriptors first.

3.1 Results

As previously stated, the 12-month period saw ten individual operations, culminating in a total search of some 617 visitors and 210 vehicles. The mean age of all visitors was 33.8 years (standard deviation 14.5 years with a range of 14–81 years). Those aged 14–20 years comprised the largest percentage (28 %) of visitors in the study, which is not surprising considering that they were visiting a YOI and not an adult prison. Those visiting aged less than 14 years were not included in this study as they were not subject to police searches. Visitor demography was relatively even across all ten operations and was consistent with official YOI figures for the previous year, with regard to the composition of visitor gender, age and ethnicity and therefore was considered a representative sample of visitors to the YOI.

3.2 Visitors and Vehicles

We think that a major attraction of SSP is its focus on the actions of individuals (i.e. the breaking of a specific law) rather than on discriminatory variables such as age and gender, so only a few descriptives are presented here for the reader to appreciate the sample of visitors involved. The mean age of visitors found offending was 31.6 years (standard deviation 10.9 years with a range of 17–55 years).

The number of visitors and vehicles searched across all ten operations was found to be consistent with an average of 61.7 visitors and 21 vehicles searched per operation (see Table 5.2). Operation two was the notable exception with a lower number of visitors being recorded, probably as a consequence of the operation coming directly after a public holiday, which are often bumper visitor days, along with weekends.

3.2.1 Offender Visitors

Table 5.2 combines the number of visitors and their vehicles stopped with a breakdown of all offences detected for each operation. Across the ten operations a total of 58 offences were detected, a ratio of approximately 1 in 10 visitors detected committing a prosecutable offence, with 4 % (n=25) of these necessitating arrests.

A breakdown of the 58 offences detected by Operation Visitor by type is presented in Fig. 5.1.

Just under a third of offences detected by Operation Visitor were drugs related (17 out of 58), giving an offending ratio of 1 in 36 visitors for offences of this nature. All instances were for possession with intent to supply 'class C' drugs (i.e. cannabis). Those found with amounts small enough to be considered for 'personal use' were cautioned or simply had the drugs confiscated. However, in total two out of every three arrests during Operation Visitor were for drugs possession with intent to supply (i.e. involving more substantial amounts). Although the detection of drug-related offences was important to both police and prison staff

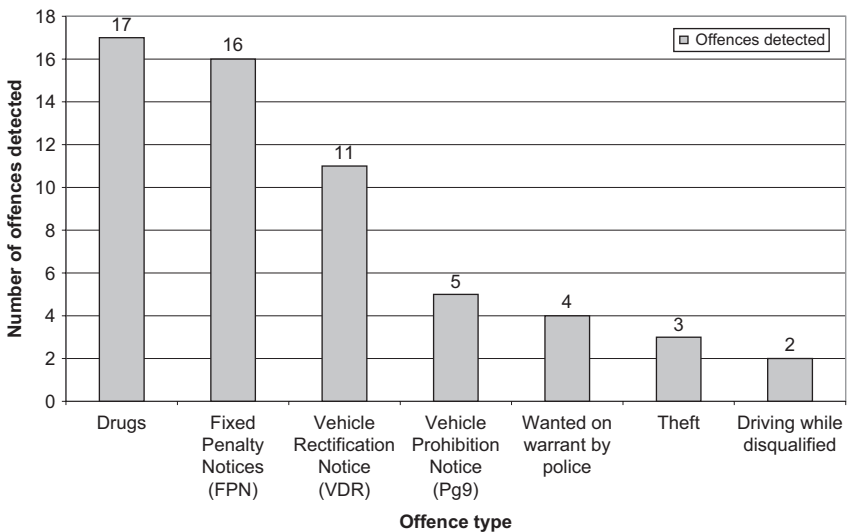


Fig. 5.1 Operation Visitor: offences detected

(and interesting in and of itself) it was not really part of our SSP fishing trip. Analysis of driving offences is presented next.

Motoring and road traffic offences (commonly termed ‘process or summary offences’) accounted for over 58 % of all detected offences committed by visitors. These included

- 2 detected as driving whilst disqualified.
- 16 given fixed penalty notices (FPN), for example, not having valid motor insurance or vehicle tax.
- 11 given vehicle defect rectification notices (VDR) for vehicles with minor defects (a third of these were public hire vehicles).
- 5 given vehicle prohibition notices (PG9) where vehicles are confiscated on the spot because they are deemed unroadworthy (two of these were private hire vehicles).

The remaining seven offences detected during the operations all resulted in arrests; three visitors were arrested for a suspected theft of a credit card (found during a vehicle search) four visitors were wanted on warrant by another police force for previous offences (two individuals for auto-theft offences, one for theft offences and one for an array of different offences) with the last one identified by the ANPR unit which indicated that he travelled in a car registered to him.

As previous research had intimated that certain minor driving-related offences could serve as reliable SSP triggers (e.g. Chenery et al. 1999), drivers were given particular attention during Operation Visitor. Drivers committed two-thirds of all offences detected by Operation Visitor, with a remaining third of offences committed by car passengers (except one offence which was committed by a pedestrian). No bus passengers (n=33) were found committing offences. Table 5.3 shows a summary of visitor offences and travel status.

It was found that driver visitors committed significantly more vehicle-related offences than other types of offences (85 % of offences by drivers were for vehicle-related offences). The ratio of offending to non-offending drivers was 1:5. The ratio of driver visitors committing just vehicle-related offences as opposed to those not committing an offence at all was approximately 1:6. The high number of driving offences found as a result

Table 5.3 Operation Visitor: travel status and visitor offences committed

Travel status	Drugs	Motoring	Warrant	Theft	Total
Driver	4	33	1	1	39
Passenger	13	0	3	2	18
Pedestrian	1	0	0	0	1
Bus passenger	0	0	0	0	0
Total	18	33	4	3	58

of Operation Visitor suggests a higher prevalence rate for prison visitors than the general population (discussed later). No driver visitor was found to be travelling in a stolen vehicle. This result has to be qualified by reference to how ANPR detection works. The databases are loaded *before* the ANPR unit takes to the road, so vehicles stolen in the few hours before arriving at the YOI (perhaps for the purpose of the visit) would not be recognized as such by the ANPR system, so our original hypothesis was not totally refuted.

The passenger visitors mainly comprised those travelling with driver visitors, but extended to those travelling by taxi. As can be seen in Table 5.3, passenger visitors were found responsible for committing the vast majority of drug offences that were detected, indeed over 70 % of passenger offences were for ‘drugs possession with intent to supply’. Three passenger visitors were wanted on warrant by another police force and a further two were arrested on suspicion of the theft of a credit card. In terms of all passenger visitors, the ratio of those found committing an offence by Operation Visitor was 1:20, with the number of passengers found committing a drug offence approximately 1:28.

Comparison of offending driver visitors and passenger visitors must, of course, discount the latter from motoring offences. However, drug offence ratios for these two groups are comparable, with the ratio of passengers committing a drug offence found to be twice as high for passengers as for drivers (1:28 and 1:52 respectively).

No bus passenger visitor was found to have committed an offence during the operations, yet all were subject to the same physical search procedure as driver visitors and passenger visitors (as shown in Table 5.3). Although car passengers tended to travel with people they were acquainted with, bus passengers were more likely to travel alone.

A reasonable conclusion might be that those travelling alone were perhaps less inclined to try and import drugs into the YOI due to an increased perception of risk (e.g. see Cornish and Clarke 1986). For example, having no immediate choice but to travel with drugs hidden about your person is likely to be considered far 'riskier' than having a vehicle to hide them in. An alternative hypothesis that must be considered is of course that they were simply more successful at not getting caught. From a total of 12, only one pedestrian visitor was found offending—a 20-year-old male, caught in possession of cannabis.

3.2.2 Criminal History Checks

Where practical, visitor names, addresses and vehicles were checked on the PNC. Where a visitor had a historic marker on the PNC it did not necessarily imply that they were criminally active, although it was felt that this gave an overall indication of the type of offence history which could then be matched to offences detected by Operation Visitor (testing the major-minor offending link). It was anticipated that checks would identify active, prolific and serious offender visitors (e.g. four had outstanding arrest warrants).

It was common, however, during operations for a large number of visitors to appear at the same time, which often threatened to overwhelm the capacity of both officers on the ground and the station control room staff running background checks. As a result, in several early operations, visitor details were not as thoroughly verified as would have been liked and some were not checked at all. As a consequence, the criminal history and intelligence checks for only 45 (78 %) of offender visitors were considered completed (i.e. reliable enough) for further analysis. No statistically significant relationship was found between age and PNC marker.

Although only 62 % of PNC-checked visitors produced a definite result (i.e. on PNC or not on PNC) 26 % of these were found to have a marker and 36 % were 'unknown' (not on PNC), which equates to 1:2.5 visitors (who were checked) having a PNC record, so providing support to the view that a significant number of visitors to prisons themselves have criminal records. Further analysis was conducted in order to establish active criminality.

A 2×2 contingency table was constructed to examine whether a significant relationship existed between visitor gender and whether they were known to the PNC for previous offences (male or female and known to PNC or not known to PNC). Chi-square analysis identified a statistically significant relationship between gender and whether known to PNC. For males known to the PNC the observed count was 21 where the expected count was 13, and for females known to the PNC the observed count was 15 where the expected count was 7. More than two-thirds of visitors, for whom it was possible to discern for definite whether they had a PNC marker or not, were male ($\chi^2=9.09$, $DF=1$, $p=0.003$). Phi was found to be 0.15 indicating a weak association between whether a visitor was known (or not) to the PNC and visitor gender. Of course this was to be expected as crime statistics consistently indicate that 80 % of crime is committed by males (e.g. see British Crime Survey 2008).

From PNC and intelligence analysis, 30 % of those visitors detected as offending by Operation Visitor, were found to have records for previous offences (n=15 visitors). Chi-square analysis (of known to PNC or not known to PNC and offender visitor or not offender visitor) showed a statistically significant relationship between visitors known to the PNC and those found offending by Operation Visitor ($\chi^2=10.97$, $DF=1$, $p=0.01$). The observed count for those known to the PNC found offending by Operation Visitor was 20 where the expected count was 12 (and the observed count for those not known to the PNC found offending was 8 but the expected count was 16). Phi was 0.17 meaning that 28 % of the variation in whether visitors offended at the YOI was accounted for by whether they were known to the PNC previously. As a discussion of reconviction rates is provided at the end of this chapter, it suffices to say here that those with criminal histories appeared to be more likely to be offender visitors committing minor crimes than those without a known criminal history, adding some substance to the notion of offenders visiting offenders.

Although the finding that a significant number of visitor offences perpetrated by those with an offence history is of importance, it did not support our hypothesis that offender visitors would be active, serious criminals, as being known to the PNC may relate to historic rather than current offending. The types of offences and their frequency, and recency in time was therefore the next area of focus for the offender visitor group.

3.2.3 Offender Visitors and Their Offending

For the purposes of SSP the offences committed by offender visitors in Operation Visitor, must have a high hit-rate for uncovering them as active, serious offenders and not as people who had criminal records for offences in the distant past, or for minor crimes. To this end, the criminal histories of the 15 visitors with a criminal background, caught offending during the ten operations, were examined.

(i) *Were they offence versatile?*

All of the 15 offender visitors known to the PNC were found to have varied offence histories, suggesting offence versatility (heterogeneity) as opposed to any great degree of offence specialization:

- 4 had committed previous drug offences
- 4 had committed offences which included violence
- 6 had committed theft
- 7 had committed a wide array of offences (e.g. theft, Theft of Motor Vehicle (ToMV) but not violence)
- 2 had committed criminal damage
- 3 had stolen a motor vehicle.

(ii) *But were they frequent offenders?*

Of the 15 offender visitors:

- 5 had a PNC record of one or two previous offences
- 2 had a PNC record of three or four offences
- 6 had a PNC record of more than five previous offences
- 2 had an undeterminable number of previous offences.

In total eight from this group had committed three or more previous officially processed offences, with six found to have committed five or more offences in their criminal history. The next question was how recent these offences were to the offending at the prison, recent meaning that they were still active offenders.

(iii) *But were they active offenders?*

To determine the extent to which this group of offender visitors could be considered active and/or serious offenders the offence records of all 15 individuals found offending by Operation Visitor were examined using the Force intelligence database, with each classified as either 'criminally active', 'criminally inactive' or 'activity unknown', according to the recency of the offences recorded during Operation Visitor. To be considered criminally active, it was agreed that an offender visitor was to have committed an offence within six months either side of Operation Visitor or if there was intelligence to suggest that they might have done so.

Seven of the 15 could be considered active offenders at the time of Operation Visitor, five as criminally inactive (although two were imprisoned soon after Operation Visitor so would perhaps be better referred to as 'resting' than inactive) and three as activity unknown (it was not possible to class them as either of the above due to a lack of current criminal intelligence relating to them).

(iv) *But were they serious offenders?*

Anecdotally (but still importantly) five of those categorized 'criminally active' were found to be well-known offenders, of the 'usual suspect' variety, having committed a large number of previous offences, including crimes involving the threat or use of violence. Additionally, a senior officer who assisted us knew all five names instantly. Furthermore, two showed as 'prolific or priority offenders' (POPO) which is a Home Office label for those causing most harm in their local community and subject to intensive scrutiny by police and other agencies (such as the National Offender Management Service).⁵ One received a three-year custodial sentence for burglary and drug offences as a result of being arrested by Operation Visitor for possession with intent to supply.

The types of offences committed by this group of 15 offender visitors, detected a result of Operation Visitor, included;

⁵For more information see, for example, <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/operational-policing/crime-disorder/persistent-offenders.html> (accessed 28 January 2009).

- two found driving whilst disqualified a serious offence in its own right.
- six who had committed a drug offence (intent to supply)
- four who had committed a motor/road traffic offence
- three who were wanted on warrant by another police force (for vehicle theft and drug-related offences).

The offender visitors with an outstanding warrant issued by other police forces and those committing drug offences provided clear support that police scrutiny of prison visitors does indeed pay dividends, as all were found to be ‘active’ offenders. Indeed two of them had committed a string of auto-theft offences and their whereabouts had been unknown to police.

4 A Summary of the Findings from Operation Visitor

The overall findings for Operation Visitor are depicted in Fig. 5.2.

As can be seen from Fig. 5.2, the proportion of driver visitors who committed prosecutable offences was 39 out of 210 (roughly 25 %). Of these 23 were arrested or prosecuted, 7 of which were found to be active, serious offenders. The findings strongly suggest that a focus on driver visitors does not only identify a significant number committing minor offences (often vehicle related), but more importantly, the probability of identifying an active, serious offender is roughly 1:30 (7 out of 210) which, at the very least, is a hit-rate which justifies the resources necessary to conduct such operations.

Although admittedly offender visitors were identified by virtue of Operation Visitor, the offences that they committed could also have been detected by routine policing (e.g. vehicle-related offences such as driving on bald tyres or with a faulty tail-light). As such, these visitors self-selected themselves for further scrutiny by virtue of the minor crimes that they committed, not because of the uniqueness of Operation Visitor. While it was anticipated (based on criminological theory and fledgling prior research) that driving while disqualified, drugs possession and driving

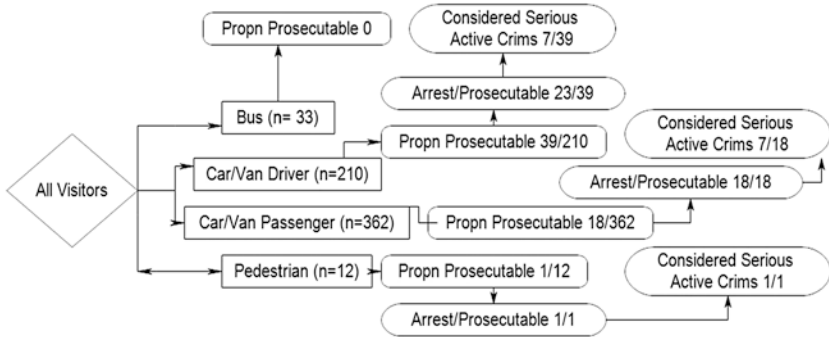


Fig. 5.2 Operation Visitor: flow chart showing summary of findings

an unroadworthy vehicle would promise to be the most reliable SSP trigger offences, the seemingly minor offence of non-compliance with a HO/RT1 form, was not and is introduced briefly in Box 5.1.

4.1 Chapter Summary

First and foremost, as a police strategy, Operation Visitor led to the detection of 58 offences committed by YOI visitors, culminating in 25 arrests. This in itself has been considered a success, worthy of continuation beyond the research period. Although few in number, the number of passenger visitors caught offending yielded a high proportion of arrests (mainly for drug offences), almost half of whom were found to be active serious offenders. Significant crime prevention effects may be had if information about the operations (but not their dates) were to be widely publicized.

Second, the ratio of visitors flagged as having offending histories (via the PNC) compared with those without, was found to be 1:10, supporting the premise that this would be a fertile group with which to learn more about offending patterns. In particular, an extremely high ratio of 1:6 driver visitors were found committing a driving/motoring offence when compared to estimates of the general population. A study by the Jill Dando Institute (2004 University College London) estimated that the ratio of illegal to legal cars on the road was 1:20, but this does not take account of all driving offences, concentrating more specifically on road

Box 5.1 Think About It: What Is/Was a HO/RT1 (They Are Not Used Anymore)?

Police officers are permitted to order drivers to stop if they notice or suspect that an offence is being committed (e.g. a faulty brake light, cracked number plate etc.). On stopping a driver, police are entitled to see his/her driving/motoring documents (e.g. driver's licence, MOT etc.). If these are not to hand police can issue the driver with a Home Office Road Transport 1 (HO/RT1) form. The driver of the vehicle is then legally compelled to present their driving licence, Ministry of Transport certificate (MOT), insurance details and vehicle ownership documents at a police station convenient to them, within seven days. To fail to do so, or to only part produce (i.e. produce some but not all the required documents) is a prosecutable offence.

In total, 134 (64 %) of driver visitors during Operation Visitor were issued with a notice HO/RT1. They had been unable to produce the relevant documentation during an operation and a PNC check had not identified any offence such as not possessing valid motor insurance or vehicle tax. If the PNC had, for example, identified them as driving without vehicle tax or insurance, the probable outcome would have been a fixed penalty notice (FPN). Without discrimination, all drivers who could not provide the appropriate documentation were issued with a HO/RT1.

A sample of 44 drivers issued with HO/RT1s during operations five and six was taken in order to establish whether an identifiable relationship between HO/RT1 disposal and offending history might exist. The hypothesis was that those drivers not complying with HO/RT1 conditions (i.e. they did not present all the required documents within seven days), would be those most probably with something to hide (e.g. actively engaged in crime, possibly of a serious nature, or had given a false name).

In total, 75 % (n = 33) of visitors complied fully with HO/RT1 requirements, producing all necessary documentation within the allotted time period. However, by not 'producing' (i.e. complying with the HO/RT1) the remaining 25 % (n = 11), all had committed a prosecutable offence, indeed five did not produce at all and six only 'part-produced' (i.e. produced some but not all the required documents). Emphasis was placed on whether HO/RT1 non-compliance indicated further criminality, by focusing on the offending histories of this group of 11 drivers. One driver who had not complied with the HO/RT1 was later identified as a well-known offender, with a string of convictions for disqualified driving and theft which had led to custodial sentences in the past, as recently as the month prior to Operation Visitor. The other ten 'non-compliant' drivers were not found on the PNC (which is not irrefutable proof of their non-criminality) but nevertheless the 1:11 'hit rate' should not be underestimated as a potential SSP trigger offence.

tax and motor insurance infractions, so arguably not the most favourable of comparisons. Estimates suggest that around 6.5 per cent of motorists drive uninsured, and that uninsured and untraced drivers kill 160 people and injure 23,000 every year in the UK (Police Professional, July 2009). How many of these illegal drivers are active, serious criminals is of course unknown and is the focus of the next chapter.

Third, Operation Visitor provided empirical support for what was previously an unempirical notion that offenders visit offenders (or at least that a significant number of prison visitors themselves have offending histories).

Fourth, to the idea of offence versatility, the findings support the hypothesis that at least some serious offenders also commit more minor offences (motoring ones in particular) and that these might be used to uncover them as more serious offenders. Four visitors were wanted on warrant at the time of the operations, whereabouts otherwise unknown. It is probable that more visitors offended than were caught, especially when one considers the occasional log-jams during some operations, where it was not possible for police to conduct checks as stringently as at other times.

At this juncture consideration must be given to some of the perceived limitations of the Operation Visitor research, namely that it represented a relatively small study of visitors to only one penal institution in England. This is a fair point and it is hoped that further research will be conducted in the future which incorporates a greater number of diverse penal institutions and a broader range of visiting hours.

Lastly, and most importantly for us, with regards to its importance for SSP, as a fishing expedition for trigger offences, Operation Visitor identified several promising possible minor offences by which active, serious offenders might be identified: minor motoring and vehicle offences (especially where VDR's are issued), driving while disqualified, and HO/RT1 non-compliance; all three are further scrutinized as SSP trigger offences in the next chapter. In this respect the fishing trip paid off. All that said, one of the writers would definitely, and one possibly, decline to be involved in a replication of the work. Readers will reach their own conclusions about the ethics of the initiative. Our plea is twofold. First, in its pure form SSP is impartial across people. It focuses on events. But by locating the initiative at a prison there is departure from this ideal. One could argue that, for example, checking vehicles parked in disabled bays without the

relevant badge is not impartial if it happens at a Waitrose store (targeting the well-to-do) or at Aldi (targeting the thrifty). While reaching a view about the ethics of the Operation Visitor approach, the reader will at least become sensitized to the ethical issues discussed more fully in Chap. 7.

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6

Driving Offences as Self-Selection Policing Triggers

Although only a minority of drivers are criminals, a vast majority of criminals are drivers (West Midlands Police (1997) found at <http://www.west-midlands.police.uk/pdfs/publications/annual-reports/.pdf> (accessed 2 January 2016).)

1 Introduction

It is estimated that there are 1.2 million uninsured vehicles on the roads of the United Kingdom.¹ The number of disqualified drivers who still drive must be huge. One speculation is that as many as 73,000 novice drivers who are disqualified continue to drive illegally.² The number of untaxed vehicles was estimated at 2.1 million in 2006.³ In urban areas, police officers are familiar with ‘pool cars’ (i.e. uninsured and untaxed cars for collective use by local offenders). The European Secure Vehicle Alliance repeatedly points out the loopholes in the vehicle registration process.⁴ Anecdotally, the

¹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/money-saving-tips/jessicainvestigates/10146140/How-many-uninsured-drivers-are-on-the-road.html> (accessed 28 January 2016).

² <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1085912/Half-disqualified-young-drivers-roads-73-000-fail-retake-test.html> (accessed 29 January 2016).

³ <http://www.autocar.co.uk/car-news/motoring/untaxed-vehicles-rise> (accessed 30 January 2016).

⁴ Viv Nicholas, personal communication December 2016.

number of activations in Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) vehicles tells of widespread vehicle illegality. In short, the roads are alive with the sound of potential trigger offences for SSP.

There is no strict definition of ‘driving offences’, despite there being considerable case law defining what both ‘driving’ and ‘driver’ are for the purposes of interpreting road traffic legislation (Corbett 2010). ‘Driving offences’ differ from ‘vehicle offences’ in that they concern offences committed by drivers, whereas vehicle crime refers to offences against vehicles (e.g. theft from a vehicle). In sum, driving offences come under road traffic law and although in some ways separate from criminal law, they are generally regarded an integral part of it (Corbett 2010). The main types of road traffic offence that involve driving are displayed in Box 6.1.

This chapter concentrates on the utility of two driving-related offences located within the *Driving with inadequate driver documentation or vehicle documentation* category, failing to comply with the HO/RT1 requirement

Box 6.1 Types of Road Traffic Offences in England and Wales

- *Driving below the minimum standard required by law* (e.g. careless driving, causing death by dangerous driving, ‘tailgating’)
- *Driver competence and physical fitness breaches* (e.g. drink and drug offences, poor eye-sight, medical conditions)
- *Speed limit breaches* (e.g. failing to observe 30 mph speed limit signs)
- *Traffic signals and signs offences* (e.g. failing to observe hatched line restrictions, red lights, no right turn signs)
- *Driving with inadequate driver documentation or vehicle documentation* (e.g. driving while unlicensed, uninsured or disqualified, and having no vehicle excise licence (tax) or vehicle registration document)
- *Construction and use offences* (e.g. driving a vehicle with faulty brakes or tyres, driving and overloaded vehicle)
- *Parking and obstruction offences* (e.g. wrongful use of a disabled person’s badge).

(discussed in the previous chapter) and the more serious driving while disqualified, as SSP trigger offences for uncovering active, concurrent criminality.

As was noted in Chap. 2, while the link between traffic offences and serious offenders has been suggested by previous research (e.g. Chenery et al. 1999; Rose 2000; Broughton 2007; Roach 2007a, b) it remains at best undeveloped, and at worst downright neglected. In what can be considered the most complete relatively recent study of the relationship between driving offences and other criminality, Gerry Rose (2000) identified from the Home Office Offenders Index data showing that drink drivers were around twice as likely to have previous convictions as would the general population. Of those caught driving while disqualified, 78 % had convictions for other crimes, many of a serious nature.

Despite the dramatic overlap between driving offences and mainstream criminality there has been little further relevant research to tease out patterns and implications. In consequence, trigger offences for use in SSP have not been identified. As far as we know, no one has looked for them. Since the Rose work was itself a reprise of the work of T.C. Willett many years before, this seems one of those research areas destined to be touched upon, forgotten, touched upon and forgotten again, for want of recognition of its wider practical implications. The second author was quite recently at a conference where one police force area proudly reported that it had (expensively) commissioned research to demonstrate the same link. That the researchers so commissioned either did not know that the research was unnecessary or (worse) knew but did not say is infuriating to say the least. Your second author could not bear the 'Groundhog Day' sensation and left the conference prematurely and depressed.

A challenge for the SSP approach lies in identifying which driving offences serve as the most reliable indicators of vertical versatility in offending, i.e. those minor offences the commission of which warrants further police attention as most likely to pay dividends in uncovering active, serious offenders without alienating large numbers of drivers whose criminality does not extend beyond the seriousness level of the designated trigger offence. To emphasize the point, as will be discussed in detail in the final chapter, SSP triggers must impose minimal

inconvenience upon members of the public to whom the logic of SSP must be communicated (Chenery et al. 1999; Wellsmith and Guille 2005). If not, then the wrath of the motorist will be felt.

The fishing expedition outlined in the previous chapter detailing Operation Visitor was on the margins of the emerging SSP literature. Visiting a prisoner friend or relative is not a criminal act, and indeed may be helpful in retaining community ties. While the context yielded a high 'hit rate' of identified criminality, we do not advocate its use as a SSP trigger. The image of a prisoner's children being delayed on their way to see their father is, with hindsight, painfully embarrassing.

It was ANPR scrutiny which provided the trigger, not the visit per se. But, not wishing to discount the importance of Operation Visitor to the development of the SSP approach, an incidental finding was that one in four drivers issued with a Home Office Road Transport 1 (HO/RT1) form failed to produce; that is to say, they failed to comply with the very basic requirement to produce their documents (driver's licence and current insurance certificate) on request or at a police station for checking within seven days. A question begged but not explored in Operation Visitor, was why so many of those issued with a HO/RT1 failed to produce. Was it, for example, because they had something to hide, perhaps active criminality, or did it just indicate a general contempt for criminal justice? Or both? In short, was it that the 'little bad thing' (failing to produce) was a flag for the 'bigger bad things' in which they were engaged? The first part of this chapter presents a bespoke analysis of HO/RT1 non-compliance, with the express aim of evaluating its potential use as an SSP trigger offence.

2 The Need for HO/RT1 Culture⁵

An inquiry by the Independent Police Complaints Committee (IPCC) published in 2006 into the murder of Hayley Jane Richards, by her ex-partner, Hugo Quintas, detailed a complaint that there had been at least two opportunities to arrest him prior to the killing. First, when local traffic police had stopped him for having a damaged nearside tail light, the officers concerned were not unduly suspicious and simply issued him

⁵ A version of this chapter was published as, Roach, J. (2007) HO/RT1culture: Cultivating police use of Home Office Road Transport 1 form to identify active serious offenders. *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, Vol. 9 (4) 357–70.

with a HO/RT1. A Police National Computer (PNC) check was carried out to ascertain the owner of the vehicle, but a force intelligence check was not requested. Had that been done, it would have identified Quintas as being wanted by police for a serious assault on Hayley Jane Richards and the subsequent tragic sequence of events may never have unfolded as they did.⁶ Second, Quintas had been issued with another HO/RT1 two months before the murder, with which he had failed to comply. The Criminal Justice Unit had failed to take any action.

This section explores the utility of HO/RT1 non-compliance for SSP by detailing a study focused on a wider sample of motorists issued with a HO/RT1 than was available in Operation Visitor. The hypothesis is that failure to comply with HO/RT1's rather routine and minor legal requirement reflects the contempt for authority underlying serious criminality in a proportion of those so failing. Some of the most obvious reasons mooted for non-compliance with HO/RT1 are presented in Box 6.2.

Box 6.2 Think About It: What Might Be the Reasons for Not Complying with a HO/RT1?

Reasons are likely to *include* the driver

- not having current motor insurance
- not having a current Department of Transport certificate (formally Ministry of Transport, MOT) for their vehicle
- travelling in a stolen vehicle
- having an identity other than that disclosed to the police officer
- being prevented from compliance by another party (e.g. criminal spouse)
- not wishing to attract police attention for fear of exposing serious criminality
- having a general belief in the impotence of policing and criminal justice, often all too justified.

This list is not exhaustive, so can you think of any we've missed?

⁶ Found at www.ipcc.gov.uk/hayley_richards_report.pdf (accessed 20 August 2006).

All the putative reasons listed in Box 6.2 except the fourth assume that the police will not pursue someone for failure to produce documents as required by HO/RT1 and, as a result of the many discussions that we have had over the years with police officers, we believe this still to be a fair assumption.

Before moving on to explanation of the method used in this research, it is pertinent briefly to introduce the purpose of the HO/RT1 and the legal requirements it imposes, in sufficient detail for those wishing to replicate the work described. This section of the chapter will end with a brief mention of the current level of HO/RT1 use in routine policing.

2.1 The HO/RT1 Process: Is It the Same for Everyone?

Sections 164 and 165 of the Road Traffic Act 1988,⁷ as amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991,⁸ enable a police officer to demand the production of a driving licence, insurance details, a Department (formerly Ministry) of Transport test certificate (MOT) and other relevant documents, from the driver of a motor vehicle. If not to hand, the driver must ‘produce’ at a police station within seven days, failure to do so being a prosecutable offence. The form is thus colloquially known as a producer.

Where the offence appeared to the officer to involve mandatory endorsement, and the driver concerned did not produce the requested documents at the scene, the officer could issue an HO/RT1 form requiring the individual to produce within seven days at a police station convenient to the driver. Officers should conduct a PNC check of the vehicle and driver and at their discretion, also conduct local force intelligence checks before issuing the HO/RT1. In cases where an individual is charged with a substantive offence, it appeared more commonplace to not issue a HO/RT1—the more serious crime, for example, driving whilst under the influence of alcohol, taking precedence.

⁷For further information please see http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1988/Ukpga_19880054_en_1.htm (accessed on 3 January 2016).

⁸For further information please see http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1991/Ukpga_19910040_en_1.htm (accessed 3 January 2016).

The astute reader will notice that we have slipped into the past tense in our discussion of the use of HO/RT1. When we conducted our study of HO/RT1 use in 2007 it was widely used by forces in England and Wales with a general consensus on HO/RT1 usage between forces (at least in terms of policy). However, its use has fallen into decline with access to driver/vehicle databases which afford police the opportunity to check, with the help of the control room, whether a driver is legal or not (i.e. has the relevant documents or is disqualified from driving). At face value at least, technology appears to have relegated the form filling involved with issuing a HO/RT1 to a brief mention in the history of road policing text books. We will park this point for now and unpack why we think it misleading and counterproductive at the end of this section.

In some respects, HO/RT1 use always appeared to be a matter of individual force emphasis with differences mainly stemming from perceptions of its wider utility (i.e. beyond just checking insurance documents and vehicle ownership) and the administrative burden associated with extensive use. For example, we found that Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, like most forces, issued guidance to its officers in 2005, that if drivers were unable to produce the necessary documents at the scene, a HO/RT1 *must* be issued in the following circumstances with the request to 'record details':

- at the scene of all road collisions, even if no further action is anticipated against any of the drivers
- when reporting a person for any offence other than by way of fixed penalty ticket.

By way of another example, in 2004, the South Wales Police Authority informed their officers that a HO/RT1 for the production of driving documents should only be issued in the following circumstances:

- to persons involved or suspected to be involved in a road traffic collision
- to persons who are reasonably suspected of committing a road traffic offence
- officers may issue a HO/RT1 to the driver/keeper of a motor vehicle or person supervising a provisional licence holder, who fails to produce immediately any relevant documentation for inspection.

The HO/RT1 issue process, therefore, did not appear to be driven (sorry) by any specific police policy or guidance, leaving much to the discretion of individual forces and officers. If officers had any doubts about a driver's identity then they were permitted to inform the driver of their intention to take a thumbprint or photograph alongside the HO/RT1 issue.

Finally, if and when the required documents were produced at a police station (as a result of a HO/RT1 issue) a HO/RT2 form was completed by an officer immediately. When none (or only part) of the required documentation was presented, a reminder was sent and if not acted upon accordingly, then the force central ticket office issued a court summons to the offending driver. We found an abundance of evidence to suggest that this often does not happen, or is indeed even possible, particularly when a driver has given false details. The police do not have time to exhaust every avenue in pursuit of those deliberately failing to comply with the HO/RT1 process and as such many drivers are never traced, still less prosecuted. Our question was whether in such cases police were missing a chance to detect a serious offender rather than letting off someone who forgot (or who just couldn't be bothered) to bring their documents in for checking. Put another way, the fact that these people could not or would not comply when issued with a HO/RT1 could indicate that

- they didn't have the correct necessary documentation for driving and would be caught out
- they didn't want the police to know who and where they were, probably for nefarious, crime-related reasons (e.g. they had given a false name and details when stopped, they were travelling in a stolen car, or they were wanted on warrant by police)
- they had an underlying contempt for the law and didn't want to comply whatever.

All three reasons suggest it worthwhile for police to follow up on the outcome of HO/RT1 issues. In the context of this book, could HO/RT1 non-compliance be a tool for SSP trigger offence for more serious criminality? Operation HO/RT1 was born.

2.2 Operation HO/RT1

The data comprised all HO/RT1 forms issued by a police force in the North of England, on 1 December 2004, a total of 129 forms. Those issued were tracked five weeks after issue (to allow for the effects of the Christmas holiday) to see if individuals fully complied, partially complied, or did not comply with the terms of the HO/RT1 to produce the relevant documentation at a police station within seven days. Background checks were conducted on all HO/RT1 recipients, with particular focus on known offending history or intelligence to suggest criminality. All criminal history checks were conducted by the first writer and police staff using the PNC and local intelligence databases on police premises (i.e. at a police station).⁹

2.3 What Happened?

In the cohort of 129 individuals (there were no cases where the same person was associated with two HO/RT1 forms), the mean age was 32 years (range was 17–83, standard deviation 12). Of those issued with a HO/RT1, 38 % failed to produce the required documentation within a seven-day period (herein after termed ‘non-compliant’). Although SSP is about the commission of a crime and not about the individual per se (e.g. sex, religion, ethnicity), sex (gender) and age were looked at in this study merely to discount them formally as a matter of possible confounding interest. They were not found to be associated with whether an individual fulfilled the HO/RT1 requirements (i.e. compliant or non-compliant) as an independent t-test did not return a statistically significant result.

Subsequent background checks (e.g. PNC) showed that overall 34 % (n=44) of the cohort had a recorded offence marker. A simple 2×2 contingency table analysis of criminal record or no record and HO/RT1 compliant or HO/RT1 non-compliant, showed a statistically significant association between non-compliance and the existence of a PNC criminal

⁹ For brevity Operation HO/RT1 is only briefly outlined here. Please contact the authors if a more detailed account is required.

offence history.¹⁰ The expected count for the non-compliant group with a PNC mark was 7 where the observed count was 28. Phi was found to be 0.38 suggesting that 14 % of the variation in HO/RT1 compliance was accounted for by whether they were known to the PNC. Of people in the non-compliant group 57 % had a criminal record.

From analysis of criminal histories, a total of 360 offences were on record for the whole cohort (129 drivers), 75 % (n=269) committed by the non-compliant group, with this group on average found to have almost five times the number of recorded offences as their compliant counterparts (mean number of offences on record being 5.7)¹¹

Table 6.1 shows the recorded offences for each group in more detail.

Not only was it found that significantly more of the HO/RT1 non-compliant group had recorded offence histories, but that they also had a much higher rate of recorded offending. Further, 42 % (n=20) of the non-compliant group had offence records which comprised more than three separate offences, while the equivalent was only 6 % (n=5) for the compliant group. So the non-compliant group appeared to have committed more offences in the past than the compliant group. What types of offence were these and why was this important?

Analysis showed a difference in regard to the types of offences on record (at least) between the compliant and non-compliant groups. In volume terms, the non-compliant group had significantly more offences against

Table 6.1 Comparison of recorded offences by HO/RT1 compliance group

Group	Total number in group	Total number of recorded offences	Mean number of recorded offences	Range of recorded offences	Std dev
Compliant	79	91	1.2	0–39	4.8
Non-compliant	47	269	5.7	0–58	11.2
Total	126	360	2.9	0–62	8.5

¹⁰ $\chi^2=18.65$, $DF=1$, $p<0.001$.

¹¹ An independent samples t-test suggested the difference to be statistically significant between the two groups with regard to number of recorded offences ($t=-3.193$, $DF=124$, $p=0.001$, two-tailed).

property, theft, fraud and deception, driving whilst disqualified and weapons offences on record, than their compliant-group counterparts. This group had also committed significantly more of what are commonly categorized as *police, courts and probation offences* (PCPs), whereby an individual fails to comply with a stipulated criminal justice condition, such as failing to attend a compulsory meeting with a Probation Officer, and failing to attend court for trial, sentencing or a bail hearing. In sum, 30 % of the non-compliant group had a history of non-compliance with other offences or failure to comply with criminal justice sanctions, strongly suggesting that non-compliance with the HO/RT1 was not a 'one-off'. This contrasted with fewer than 4 % of the compliant group. In light of this finding it was perhaps no surprise that those with a history of failing to comply with specific legal requirements and conditions, also failed to comply with the HO/RT1 legal requirements, symptomatic perhaps of a 'chaotic' lifestyle, and a wish to conceal other misdemeanours. Or (perhaps most likely) a realistic appreciation of how imperfectly the criminal justice system follows up those who flout their legal obligations to it.

A simple contrast of criminal records between the HO/RT1 compliant and non-compliant groups does not in itself indicate that the latter were criminally active at the time of HO/RT1 issue. To reaffirm, SPP is about uncovering active, serious offending, from the commission of 'trigger' offences. To this end, a gap of six months was given between HO/RT1 issue and further analysis of recorded offences to afford a comparison of the cohort's offending: six months before HO/RT1 issue and six months after issue. This time frame afforded the opportunity to conduct analysis of individual offending both before and for a non-trivial period after HO/RT1 issue, providing a criminal career window incorporating offences prior to and after the date of HO/RT1 issue. Temporal analysis of offences perpetrated by those in both the compliant and non-compliant groups relative to HO/RT1 issue is presented in Table 6.2.

All individuals were assigned to one of four categories:

- non-offenders (i.e. had no recorded offence history)
- those who had recorded offences only *before* HO/RT1 issue
- those who had recorded offences *before and after* HO/RT1 issue
- those who had recorded offences only *since* HO/RT1 issue.

Table 6.2 Offending histories before and after HO/RT1 issue

Offender categories	HO/RT1 compliant	HO/RT1 non-compliant
No offence history	64 (75 %)	21 (25 %)
Before HO/RT1 issue only	9 (43 %)	12 (57 %)
Before and after HO/RT1 issue	3 (21 %)	11 (79 %)
After HO/RT1 issue only	3 (50 %)	3 (50 %)
Total	79 ^a (63 %)	47 ^a (37 %)

^aThere were 3 incomplete criminal histories (1 compliant and 2 non-compliant) so a complete analysis was impossible.

A general estimate of HO/RT1 non-compliance in the UK driver population is hard to find. Cheshire Constabulary estimated that approximately one-third of drivers, for one reason or another, fail to comply.¹² This is broadly in line with the 37 % found in our HO/RT1 sample here. Others have estimated that 6.5 % of drivers do not have insurance (Police Professional 2009) which is likely to contribute to a high level of non-compliance as these drivers do not wish to expose the offence of driving while uninsured. We can add the finding here that half of those who failed to comply with the HO/RT1 had an offence history (i.e. were known to the PNC at the time). Whether HO/RT1 non-compliance best predicts an offence history or more recent (concurrent) offending is now explored.

An analysis of the recency of offending using recorded offences listed on the PNC indicated that the non-compliant group had on average three years since their last recorded offence, while the compliant group's last offence on average was over six years prior to the HO/RT1 issue. At face value at least, the non-compliant group had more recent offences on record than the compliant one (1 in 3 and 1 in 12.5 respectively). This suggests that a significant number of those who do not comply with HO/RT1 go on to commit other offences (which are at least recorded). Non-compliance with a HO/RT1 appeared at least to be predictive of future offending.

¹² <http://www.cheshire.police.uk/showcontent.php?pageid=431> (accessed January 2009).

Table 6.3 Percentage of offending incidence in year before, year of and year after HO/RT1 issue

Year	HO/RT1 compliant (%)	HO/RT1 non-compliant (%)
-1	15	57
0 (year of HO/RT1 issue)	10	90
+1	7	30

From the non-compliant group, almost one-third could have been considered active offenders in the sense that they were officially processed for offences during the 12 months *following* the HO/RT1 issue, compared with only 8 % of the compliant group. Table 6.3 shows both groups when their recorded offences period was expanded to a year before and after the HO/RT1 issue (0 being year of HO/RT1 issue, -1 the year before, and +1 the year after).

As can be seen, more of those from the non-compliant group had recorded offences up to a year after the HO/RT1 issue (+1 year) than those in the compliant group, suggesting that a significant proportion of those who do not comply with a HO/RT1 are committing other offences and will go on to commit further crimes within 12 months. Moreover, fewer of those from the compliant group had offences recorded for the year previous to the HO/RT1 issue, strengthening the hypothesis that those who do not comply with HO/RT1 are not only more likely to be concurrently offending, but are also more entrenched in a criminal career.

To explore whether criminality followed HO/RT1 issue further, the categories from Table 6.2 were reduced by combining the period 'before and after HO/RT1 issue' with 'after HO/RT1 issue only'. As such, whether there had been recorded criminality before issue was of limited interest. A simple 2x2 contingency table was constructed consisting of offence before and after, and compliance and non-compliance. There was found to be a statistically significant¹³ difference with non-compliance predominating in the collapsed 'later offending' group. Phi was found to be 0.48, indicating that 24 % of the variation in whether people went on to offend after HO/RT1 was explained by whether they complied with

¹³ $\chi^2=10.87$, DF=1, $p<0.01$.

police scrutiny of this group, likely to pay huge dividends with regards to identifying active offenders for minimal effort. But are they likely to be offenders entrenched in criminal careers?

A simple ‘criminal career duration to date’ calculation was devised for those individuals with at least two offences separated in time, using last and first offence dates,¹⁴ calculated by subtracting the date of first offence from the date of last (e.g. last offence, 2004 minus first offence 2000 gives a career of four years). The mean career length for the HO/RT1 non-compliant group was found to be more than double that of the compliant group (2.8 and 1.3 years respectively). Although, the result of an independent means t-test was marginally short of the conventional threshold of statistical significance ($p=0.06$) the finding that HO/RT1 non-compliers tend to have longer criminal careers than compliers, again lends support to HO/RT1 non-compliance as a SSP tool for uncovering more serious criminality.

2.4 But Were They Active, Serious Offenders?

Analysis was conducted that focused on the type of offences committed by those considered to be active offenders (hereafter the ‘active group’) from the research detailed above. Table 6.4 displays the offence types

Table 6.4 A summary of recorded offences (per type) for the HO/RT1 non-compliant ‘active’ offender group

Type of offence	% of active offender group who have committed offence type (n=14)
Theft and kindred	79 % (11)
Police, Court and Prison (PCP)	71 % (10)
Public disorder	64 % (9)
Offences against property	50 % (7)
Offences against the person	50 % (7)
Driving whilst disqualified	36 % (5)
Drugs	36 % (5)
Fraud and kindred	29 % (4)
Airguns/weapons	21 % (3)

¹⁴This was a simple calculation and not of the Markov Chain variety.

for the 'active' offender category, comprised of 14 individual offence histories.

As can be seen, the recorded criminal histories of the active group is at least suggestive of frequent participation in serious criminality. For example, half this group had committed offences against the person (including violence), two-thirds had committed public order offences (including threatening behaviour), with a third having convictions for drugs offences. Also important was the high proportion of this group who had committed theft (79 %). The prior offence of most interest when discriminating those likely not to comply with a HO/RT1 is the collective Police, Court and Prison offence (PCP), which includes failing to attend court and failing to comply with bail conditions. The commission of this category of offences, as discussed previously, goes some way to explaining the non-compliance, in that these individuals have a reason to remain under the police radar. Further analysis of HO/RT1 disposal outcomes was warranted.

To enable a police officer to access criminal history information, the driver must have at least supplied his name (or a plausible identity). There is a case for saying that those who could not be traced may be more active and prolific than other non-compliers (Roach 2010). Analysis of HO/RT1 disposal outcomes for the 47 non-compliers suggested that nine had been classed as 'untraceable' by police, meaning the individual had given a false name and/or address to the issuing officer, with the intention of avoiding a subsequent court summons. Two HO/RT1 false detail givers were later traced and found to have committed offences within six months following the HO/RT1 issue. This still left seven complete unknown individuals who were potentially active, serious offenders of whom the police had no knowledge. If the previous finding that 57 % of the non-compliant group have criminal histories is applied to this group of untraceables, then approximately four should be considered likely serious offenders, worthy of tracking by police. The fact that they gave false details indicates mischievousness at best, active criminality at worst.

Tangentially, what does it mean when someone who does not comply with a HO/RT1 is considered 'untraceable' by police? We were permitted to check those addresses given by those non-compliant with HO/RT1, and said to be untraceable by police, with the relevant elec-

toral register for the period of the HO/RT1 study. We found that half of the identities given matched names and addresses on the electoral register. The names were registered at the addresses given, but this does not mean that these were the real details of those issued with the HO/RT1. For example, it could be that these were names and addresses of people known to a non-compliant driver but not those of the driver themselves. What is not known here is the extent to which police *really tried* to trace these individuals. Only one driver was eventually convicted of ‘deception’ for giving false details to police. Those not on the electoral register were more understandably untraceable. Of the remaining members of the traceable non-compliant group, all had received penalties for having failed to provide evidence of adequate motor insurance and/or an MOT certificate and some had failed to produce a driving licence. But could they be considered serious offenders?

Perhaps, at this juncture, it is pertinent to provide a brief recapitulation of the findings of this small study to this point as a basis for the next analysis. It was found that the HO/RT1 ‘non-compliant’ group differed from the ‘compliant’ group in respect of having a recorded offence history comprising

- a greater number of recorded offences
- offences both of a serious nature and more recent in occurrence.

To identify those variables that were the most significant predictors of HO/RT1 ‘non-compliance’ (and in reverse, what would be predicted about an offender by it) a *logistic regression* was employed. Logistic regression is a statistical technique used to predict values of a dichotomous (binary) *criterion variable* (DV) from continuous and/or categorical *predictor variables* (IV). It also determines the proportion of the variation in the criterion explained by the predictors and ranks their importance and assesses any interaction between them and any covariates (Gavin 2008, p. 229). Sparing the reader the statistical details, criminal career length and number of offences reliably and independently statistically distinguished compliers from non-compliers.

Based on the evidence from this small study at least, it suggests that police should treat those who do not comply with the conditions of a HO/RT1 as likely to be active offending individuals, entrenched in significant criminal careers (categorized by Moffitt (1997, 1999) as 'life-course persistent' offenders). Not simply, as is usually the case, as minor transgressors unworthy of much attention.

It was hoped that the most recent offending to HO/RT1 issue date would be the best predictor variable but this was not found to be the case. This was probably because offence dates were incomplete in places (or only court dates were listed) and so it was problematic to determine those offences which were committed close to HO/RT1 issue date (concurrent) as opposed to those some time after HO/RT1 issue. As such, it was only possible to create a binary variable, offended or did not offend, since HO/RT1 issue. In short, although recency of offending was not tested in the regression analysis as such, analysis already presented in this chapter is sufficient to sustain optimism.

2.5 A Pragmatic Approach to HO/RT1 Non-Compliance as a Self-Selection Policing Trigger Offence

So what does this all mean? The findings of the HO/RT1 study are presented pictorially in Fig. 6.1.

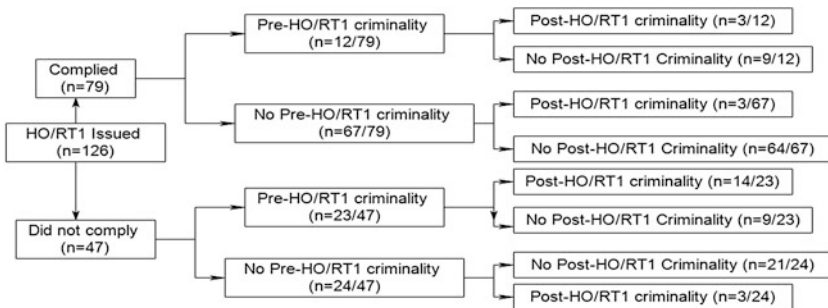


Fig. 6.1 Flow chart depicting HO/RT1 outcomes

Some will argue, and with a degree of justification, that this study is somewhat limited (and so ‘unrepresentative’) of all HO/RT1 outcomes as it was based on a relatively small sample of individuals. Like the Operation Visitor study in the previous chapter, the HO/RT1 study relied upon the help of police. These studies were not funded by any research body and were only made possible by the good will and belief in what we were trying to do, by a host of police officers to whom we are eternally grateful. Although the population samples were small, there are no extant studies with which to compare the findings, but the proportion of HO/RT1 non-compliers (38 %) appears reasonably consistent with estimates made by police forces in the past.¹⁵

In SSP terms, at the very least this study provides police with a rudimentary profile of who is likely and who is not likely to comply with a HO/RT1 and several brief recommendations for issuing officers can be made.

- If a PNC check shows a history of three or more offences then the individual is likely to not show to be engaged in active criminality, possibly of a serious nature. Scrutiny should be directed at these individuals.
- If PNC checks indicate recent offences of theft, burglary, public disorder and PCP then further background scrutiny should be employed.
- Scrutiny of those who do not comply with HO/RT1 is likely to pay dividends in uncovering offending of a more active and serious nature.

The demonstrated utility of focusing on HO/RT 1 non-compliers to uncover serious offenders invites police to take HO/RT1 use seriously, both at the point of issue and in the tracing of non-compliers. Hopefully, by demonstrating that a high proportion of non-compliers are likely to be active serious offenders, this may go some way to convincing police to use them more productively, instead of dismissing non-compliers as simply minor offenders of low priority.

Of course, these recommendations are not mutually exclusive. For example, when a cursory scrutiny of a non-complier indicates that they have committed a recent burglary and they have a history of other offences, they should be made a priority for more intensive scrutiny (i.e.

¹⁵ See Cheshire Constabulary estimate found at <http://www.cheshire.police.uk/showcontent.php?pageid=431>

lifestyle, associates etc.) as the likelihood is that they are actively engaged in concurrent serious offending. This is why they do not comply with the HO/RT1. That said, the results of the present study seem worthy of immediate application by police forces across the country. One officer, for example, who was involved in the study, when shown the recommendations by the writer said, “What have we got to lose, we should be doing this anyway” (Anon).

Although the findings and subsequent recommendations of the HO/RT1 study hopefully provide a case for smarter use of the HO/RT1 by police, enthusiasm must be slightly tempered as they must be considered in an appropriate context. Non-compliance, on many occasions may be the result of the driver not possessing motoring insurance and it has been estimated that 1 in 20 drive without insurance in the UK (Greenaway 2004).¹⁶ Although in itself a prosecutable offence, it would not be considered serious by many and would in all likelihood result in a fine and points on a licence. However, this consideration must be measured against those with criminal inclinations, who may take their chances driving ‘illegally’ (as, for example, did the serial murderer Fred West). There is no reason to doubt the research literature that this relatively minor infraction of the law is not symptomatic of a wider disregard for the law (Kelling and Coles 1995).

The obvious question begged is whether police have missed the opportunity for serious offenders to be identified from non-compliance with a HO/RT1, as HO/RT1 use has somewhat dwindled in recent years. Use has reduced principally due to the police’s acquisition of new technology and access to large databases of information which can tell them whether a driver has the appropriate insurance, driver’s licence, vehicle tax and so on within seconds. At face value at least, there seems little point persisting with the traditional means of issuing a HO/RT1 and compelling drivers to present their documents at a police station, which only serves to waste the police and public’s time. We fear, however, that the baby may have been thrown out with the bathwater, for although officers with access to databases such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency database and numerous insurance databases may uncover instantly those drivers without the necessary

¹⁶Greenaway, D. (2004) Uninsured driving in the UK: A report to the Secretary of State for Transport found at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/miud/uninsurededrivingintheuka.pdf> (accessed 7 January 2009).

documents and insurance cover, we think it likely that it is the not wanting to go to a police station to produce, which plays the biggest part in the HO/RT1 non-compliance of those actively engaged in wider criminality. Unless, of course, police officers see driving-related minor offences as SSP triggers in their own right and further scrutinize those that they find committing them. We posit that more often than not, a driver caught without appropriate insurance will be considered to be simply a minor offender (Roach and Pease 2013, discussed in Chap. 7) and this sense our mourning of the passing of the HO/RT1 remains justified.

3 Driving While Disqualified as a Self-Selection Policing Trigger Offence

We do not feel that a driving ban per se is likely to be indicative of serious criminality as there are numerous ways of receiving one, ranging from the accumulation of points for seemingly minor road traffic violations, such as doing 32 mph (miles per hour) in a 30 mph zone, to an instant ban for driving at in excess of 100 mph, dangerous driving (so as to endanger life) and driving whilst in excess of the blood alcohol limit. Although we do consider being banned from driving to be a serious crime, others may disagree. Instead we favour the view that those who continue to drive whilst banned are more likely to be engaged in active, serious and concurrent criminality, than those who are banned but do not. Lacking consensus as to whether a trigger offence is itself serious, using it as such will reveal and direct attention to those for whom the trigger offence bespeaks a criminal lifestyle. If the trigger offence is itself deemed serious, go for enforcement. Whether or not it is so regarded, if it reveals wider criminality, go for that (too or instead). SSP is a win-win tactic.

Unfortunately, our progress on the use of ‘driving while disqualified’ as a SSP trigger offence has not been as expedient as we would have liked. We are still collecting the data on a sample of 150 individuals caught driving while disqualified between 2004 and 2014 in an area

of the UK's West Midlands. Our preliminary findings, however, have surpassed our expectations as we have found that of the 50 whose criminal records we have searched so far, no fewer than 43 were on record for more crimes than the original driving disqualification and driving while disqualified offences. Moreover, over two-thirds have been officially processed for more than 10 other offences, with 10 having been processed for over 50 other offences. So far, our early findings are that those caught driving while disqualified are an offence versatile bunch, also engaged in a wide variety of other criminality, ranging from drugs possession and intent to supply, to grievous bodily harm (GBH), robbery and burglary. Our next planned area of analysis for this data is to determine how common it was that those caught driving while disqualified were actively engaged in other criminality *at the time* and if so, what types of offences they were engaged in. We will hopefully complete this work with a larger sample in the next few months (Roach 2016 in preparation) and more light will be shed on the utility of using driving while disqualified as a SSP trigger offence.

4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter we concentrated on the use of driving-related offences as SSP triggers for identifying active, serious offenders. We looked at two studies in particular: HO/RT1 non-compliance and driving while disqualified. Although it is still early days, both provide support to the idea that driving-related offences are a fruitful area for SSP. That is not to say that these are the only two driving-related offences worthy of exploration for the application of SSP. In the next and last chapter we suggest some further minor offences which might serve as SSP triggers, what conditions they must fill to be considered appropriate (we call this our 'ten commandments for SSP'), how to develop an SSP study/trial, where we think SSP will be challenged and the barriers it will face, and lastly, where we see SSP going in the future, for example, with regard to those planning acts of terrorism.

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7

A Long and Winding Road? Barriers to Adopting Self-Selection Policing

1 Introduction

From the title of this chapter (and the previous one) the reader would be totally within their rights to conclude that SSP is really just about identifying a few minor driving offences that have a better than average chance of uncovering active, serious criminals. Although this is probably a fair summation thus far, in this chapter (the last) we suggest several other non-driving related minor offences which might also serve as reliable SSP trigger offences. We do not (and never have) considered SSP a 'one-trick pony' and in this chapter we encourage the reader to think about other potential SSP triggers based on their reading of this book. Indeed we go so far as to suggest ways of identifying, planning, developing and testing possible new SSP ideas. As we have said before, to us this book is very much a beginning and not an end, a work in progress in need of fresh input from others, in need of new roads to travel (sorry we're at it again with the driving analogies, so please forget that line). First, however, we need to deal with the elephant in the room; how to change current police thinking and practice which currently represents a barrier to thinking along SSP lines and incorporating SSP in routine police practice.

How does change happen in policing (and no doubt many other organizations)? One cynical colleague identified three stages in the adoption of a new way of working:

- the idea is ridiculous
- we've been testing this for some time
- we've always known this and don't need any help.

Sadly (in our view) the standard view currently promulgated is that any policing initiative is best assessed by the application of a randomized controlled trial (RCT) in which samples (of people or areas) are matched and one given the 'new' treatment and one given the standard (or no) treatment. The RCT is sometimes labelled the 'gold standard' in evaluation. In some contexts it merits that label. In a surprising number of contexts it does not. The heartland of the RCT is medicine. Irving Kirsch (2009) reviewed the RCT-based evidence for the efficacy of the class of anti-depression drugs including the best known, Prozac. The RCT is intended to bypass the placebo effect, whereby people receiving a treatment are disposed to conclude that it works. This relies on the patient not knowing whether they are receiving the new drug or a placebo. Kirsch showed that most patients did know. How did they know (even the physician dispensing the treatment did not know, the so-called double-blind design). The patient knows because placebos do not have side effects! If the patient reasoned, I am experiencing side effects then it's odds-on I am receiving the new drug. If I am not experiencing side effects, it's probably the placebo. More widely, think of the problems for RCTs in specialisms like surgery. There the surgeon must know whether the standard procedure or the new type of surgery is being applied. But the surgeon is familiar with and practised in the standard approach but not the new approach. Knowing which treatment was applied may shape how after-care is organized. These are some of the problems attending the RCT in the discipline in which it is most revered. Given the complexities of policing, matters are much worse.

For some initiatives in complex organizations dealing with changing problems RCTs make sense. For most it does not. Some of the reasons are:

- Treatment variation: It makes sense to compare a 300 mg aspirin tablet with an identical looking placebo because quality control in the pharmaceutical industry will ensure that every aspirin tablet will be the same. In policing treatment varies according to the motivation of the implementers and their managers.
- Time: Implementation techniques and standards change over time such that the initiative becomes unrecognizable from its original form. The results of the initial evaluation become irrelevant. Imagine in medicine the evaluation of an antibiotic. This becomes irrelevant to the extent that bacteria evolve resistance to it.
- Ethics: Police officers tend to do what they think is right. Generally this leads to what is known as noble cause corruption. In this context it leads to the subversion of randomization in the allocation of services. Even the studies which have taken the most intense and painstaking efforts to allocate treatments randomly have met with criticism. This point is developed below.

The police service has a subtle and complex immune system which will ensure that anything alien will be rejected or distorted in form. So the notion of SSP is intended as a seed to be nurtured by interested practitioners (if there are any). It would grow into forms which are consistent with the principles and priorities already embedded in policing. If our retired police friends are right, the spirit of SSP is not new but dormant. That gives it a chance of revival. What are the obstacles to such a revival?

In our opinion, the primary barriers and hurdles to the implementation of SSP over the past decade can be roughly categorized as follows: *perceptions of offending patterns, police policy and practice, and lack of a dedicated research programme* (Roach 2016 in press). We will consider each in turn.

1. *Perceptions of offending patterns*

Despite the overwhelming research evidence supporting criminal versatility, there are many reasons to hypothesize that people will tend to overstate the homogeneity of criminal careers (i.e. the degree of offence specialization) rather than overstate heterogeneity (offence versatility), but here are some:

- The very language we use to categorize offenders often implies homogeneity, for example when we speak of burglars and paedophiles, rather than of ‘offenders whose most recent crime was burglary or sexual offences against children’. The very existence of a vocabulary of this kind itself suggests that offenders are framed in these more circumscribed ways (Roach and Pease 2013). Moreover, the popularity of perceiving serious offenders to be ‘crime specialists’ is reflected in popular crime programmes and literature, exemplified by colourful characters like the Victorian gentleman ‘safe-breaker’ Raffles (Hornung 1899).
- Overestimation of offence specialization across a criminal career may of course be a result of the influence of the representativeness heuristic identified by Kahneman et al. (1982) whereby often information of little (or partial) relevance is used as a basis for making decisions (e.g. Bar-Hillel 1982; Kahneman 2011). In this context an individual with a conviction for a sexual offence is likely to be considered to pose a danger to children by many who live close by. One important manifestation of the representativeness heuristic in the investigative context is ‘confirmation bias’, whereby initial partial or non-relevant information (in this case the prior officially processed offence) restricts an investigator’s search space inappropriately (Rossmo 2009) (e.g. where those with convictions for burglary are not considered as suspects for a robbery).
- Our research suggests that police officers also tend to overestimate offence homogeneity. In Roach and Pease (2013) we found overwhelmingly that police participants considered an individual’s previous offence types as the best predictor of their future types of offending, irrespective of the type of offence history presented. Put simply, whatever the first offence type, participants predicted that most likely the next offence would be of the same type (e.g. for offender with previous offence of robbery the most likely next offence prediction was robbery). Indeed, for the vast majority of offenders and offence types, the average for participant predictions of offence homogeneity was in excess of 50 %, where comparison with reconviction studies estimated a more modest 30 % (e.g. Cunliffe and Shepherd 2007).

So why has this been a likely barrier to the wider adoption of the SSP approach? A police overestimation of offence homogeneity, with particular regard to serious criminals, appears to be pervasive with specialist squads and teams organized to combat criminals according to the type of crimes they commit (e.g. robbery squads) and can be construed to some degree to be suitable evidence that police do not see serious offenders as generalists (Roach and Pease 2013). The overestimation of offence homogeneity as a collective police perspective poses a significant problem for policing methods which seek to identify active, serious offenders from their versatile offending patterns, especially more minor infractions of the law, which is the essence of SSP. Furthermore, offence homogeneity appears to be pervasive with specialist squads and teams organized to combat criminals according to the type of crimes they are thought to specialize in (e.g. robbery squads). This can be construed to some degree to be suitable evidence that police do not see serious offenders as generalists. It is no surprise perhaps that with this backdrop SSP remains at present somewhat relegated to uniformed officers, with CID (Criminal Investigation Department) still only dealing with serious crime. Political rhetoric on street robbery, gun crime, knife crime and paedophilia help build silos of offence types which preclude opportunities for control once one recognizes offender versatility. This point is developed in the next section.

Put simply, misperceptions of offending patterns are likely to have had a negative influence on whether to adopt the SSP approach (or not) over the past decade. The same appears to equally dominate the thinking around policing policy.

2. Police policy and practice

In 2008 a UK Government commissioned report ‘The Review of Policing’, by Sir Ronnie Flanagan, sets out recommendations for UK policing in the twenty-first century (Flanagan 2008). Many of the report’s final recommendations, unsurprisingly, set out how UK policing must change in order to combat serious crime (including terrorism) suggesting that police resources need to be ‘freed up’ in order to meet the challenges

presented by serious criminals. Although most people (us included) will agree with Sir Ronnie's suggestion that serious crime is a priority, what is most important to SSP is that such a recommendation is explicitly framed in such a way that serious and minor offenders are differentiated as separable groups, with those who do big bad things only doing big bad things. At the highest policy level, there appears, therefore, little awareness or understanding of the bulk of the research on criminal careers and offending patterns pointing to offence versatility. This state of affairs is aggravated by the fact that most minor offending flies under the radar of official acknowledgement that it ever happened. For example, in America when the serial murderer Daniel Rifkin was stopped for speeding, the police officer found the body of his thirteenth victim in the back of his van. Needless to say, Rifkin was never charged with speeding. Without an appreciation that serious offenders also commit minor offences, it is unsurprising that the SSP approach has fallen largely on the deaf ears with policymakers. If briefly, we take as an example the issue of crime recording, Flanagan recommends that:

Clearly, a new approach to crime recording is needed which continues to properly record crime allegations reported by the public, but recognizes the need for proportionality and properly reflecting public needs and expectations. (Flanagan 2008, p. 56)

It is likely that the 'proportional approach' to which Flanagan refers represents a streamlining of information recording for minor offences. This is evidenced by the line,

I recommend that these matters are recorded in a much more concise way, which would avoid the need to complete the long reports that are used in some forces to record a crime. (Flanagan 2008, p. 56)

The point we make is that Flanagan obviously believes that recording the same level of detailed information for minor offences as for serious offences is a considerable waste of police resources, where officers could be used more efficiently—catching serious criminals one presumes, instead

of doing ‘the paperwork’ for minor offences. If one subscribes to, as Sir Ronnie Flanagan obviously does, ‘black and white thinking’—where serious criminals only commit serious crime—then this recommendation for saving valuable police time on trivial offences may make sense to the research uninformed, but it is obviously at odds with the SSP approach and is not the only example of this.

Policy guidelines for police also set out criteria by which crimes will be screened before any investigation. Such a policy provides (i) a framework by which police are to initially assess whether a crime should be investigated further or not (known as ‘filed first time’), (ii) a crime seriousness and solvability guide, and (iii) how officers and staff should be deployed to investigate a crime: commonly known as ‘crime screening’.

Typically, crime screening policy guidance divides crimes into four types, listed in descending order of priority¹:

- *Mandatory Crimes*—These are the most serious crimes that will always be investigated and take primacy over all other crime types. These crimes include, for example, terrorism, any crime that leads to the death of a person, sexual offences and robbery.
- *Priority Crimes*—These crimes may not, by their nature, be serious but are considered to be of significance nationally and/or locally. Most police forces produce a list of priority crimes annually. These crimes include, for example, Class A drug trafficking, distraction burglary and vehicle crime.
- *Signal Crimes*—These crimes are subject to local prioritization. Again, these may not, in themselves, be considered serious, but are considered to have a “disproportionate impact on community confidence” (p. 1). They will not necessarily be subject to investigation, but where they are they will be prioritized for investigation after Priority Crimes. These crimes include, for example, anti-social behaviour, regular public disorder in a particular vicinity and Class B drug dealing.
- *Non-Priority Crimes*—These are crimes that do not fall within any of the other three categories and will “be expedited for investigation and

¹Cambridge police policy guidance found at http://www.cambs.police.uk/about/foi/policies/Crime%20Screening%20Policy%20_09.10.06_.pdf (accessed 3 February 2009).

resourcing after mandatory, priority and signal crimes” (p. 4). Perhaps somewhat unsurprisingly, no examples are listed here.

The crime screening decision-making processes and the prioritization of the crime for the allocation of resources for investigations will depend on the category to which a crime is allotted. What is of most interest to the adoption (or lack of) the SSP approach is that although serious and priority crimes are, and quite rightly, ‘prioritised’, minor ‘non-priority offences’ are totally disregarded unless there appear what are termed ‘special aggravating features’ (such as, repeat victimization or evidence of victimization). Crimes are therefore, screened and then categorized in ‘black and white’, with serious and minor offenders constructed as distinct groups. Such explicit crime screening policy is, therefore, again unaware of the existence of links between serious offenders and minor offences and is again at odds with SSP. The low priority given to most minor offences gets worse when ‘solvability factors’ are introduced into the screening process.

The operational justifications and policy reasons for crime screening are beyond the remit of this chapter and are merely mentioned here to illustrate the how deeply many policymakers consider minor offences to be of such little importance. Indeed, most minor offences will fail to make it through the screening process, with only serious offences investigated and serious offenders targeted.

The reader is (hopefully) suitably swayed by the argument that serious offenders are often offence heterogeneous, vertically versatile, with offending patterns tending to be not as ‘black and white’ as police policy writers appear to believe. Such screening policies are the antithesis of SSP, whereby many possible SSP opportunities for identifying serious offenders are forgone, simply because police policy and guidance deems minor offences the sole remit of minor, inconsequential offenders. It suffices to say here that these are only the two main ways UK police policy guidance (and thinking) is currently working against the SSP approach. So how can these barriers in thinking and police policy be overcome if SSP is to flourish? Some brief suggestions comprise the remainder of the chapter.

2 A Future for Self-Selection Policing?

In order for SSP to become part of routine police practice, several changes have to be made. Although the challenges are by no means small, they are achievable.

First a sea change in thinking about criminal careers and offending patterns is required. When one understands that the main purpose of SSP is to identify active, *serious* offenders, then it no longer appears to clash with current police policy. When being sold to the police, therefore, SSP must appeal to the serious crime agenda. As discussed, possibly the largest obstacle to SSP is the police mindset, with the tendency to overestimate offence homogeneity. If as anticipated it is universal (Roach and Pease 2013) then it must be breached before SSP can be accepted. The writers guess that this will only be achieved if more research evidence demonstrating offence heterogeneity is presented to strengthen the case and if officers (particularly new recruits) are educated otherwise, possibly facilitated by the College of Policing² (now responsible for developing police doctrine and practice for England and Wales). To stress again, the incentive for change must be led by good quality, evidence-based SSP research.

With regard to the wider topic of offender SSP, acknowledgement must be given that many experienced and astute police officers already have an intuitive sense of the potential of offender SSP. However, the argument here is as follows:

- The minor offences which are chosen to trigger special attention should be based on research establishing the extent and nature of links with more serious offending. This removes subjectivity from the enforcement process.
- A process should be established whereby the intuitions of police officers are made external and available, and tested against the evidence.

In short, offender SSP is not as much about rediscovering one aspect of the craft of policing, as it is about evidencing and quantifying links

²<http://www.college.police.uk/Pages/Home.aspx> (accessed 8 October 2015).

between offences of which some experienced officers have a sense, and discarding those police intuitions which are unfounded.

The second suggestion involves a sea change in approach but links to the first. Despite the growing amount of criminological research suggesting that offenders (including serious) tend to be offence heterogeneous—particularly the criminal careers literature (e.g. Farrington et al. 2006; Soothill et al. 2000b; Farrington and Hawkins 1991) little attention is paid generally by criminologists to the possible significance of minor offences. As discussed, criminal career research neglects the importance of minor offences in a career, preferring to treat minor offences as markers of onset and evidence of de-escalation of seriousness, temporary or otherwise. To the writers' knowledge, SSP is not mentioned in any of the leading texts in *criminology*, *crime science*, or *policing* (e.g. Maguire et al. 2012; Newburn 2012; Newburn and Neyroud 2008; Wortley and Mazerolle 2008; Newburn et al. 2007; Smith and Tilley 2005).

It is hoped that with the development of a growing body of research dedicated to SSP this situation will change. What is needed most perhaps is a programme of research which explores in more detail the links between serious and minor offending, and identifies reliable and robust trigger offences. As will be discussed more fully at the end of this chapter, we are currently researching the criminal histories and offending patterns of disqualified drivers, minor offences most likely to be committed by those planning to execute acts of terrorism, and cruelty to animals as SSP triggers for serious, concurrent criminality. But this is a drop in the ocean compared to what can and needs to be done.

Finally, below are listed briefly several key action points (in no particular order) which might serve as a '7-point battle-plan' for hearts and minds, with regard to the acceptance and implementation of SSP, by police and public alike. If those who do big bad things are still doing little bad things, then an evidence-based programme of research will provide police with an additional weapon with which to identify them.

What is needed?

- **A dedicated research programme to investigate the major-minor offending link.** There are zillions of potential minor offences which could act as markers for serious offender identification. Vigorous research is needed to discover the most reliable and robust.

- **A reframing of minor offences as significant.** Evidence is still growing in support of serious offenders displaying crime versatility, especially with regard to committing both serious and minor infractions of the law. By committing minor offences serious offenders are self-selecting for increased police attention, which can be used to uncover more serious criminality.
- **SSP does not discriminate.** The beauty of this approach is that it does not seek to identify via discriminatory practice, such as offender profiling, it is focused instead on actions (i.e. the breaking of a law, however minor).
- **Give officers as much know-how as possible.** Most frontline officers have less than five years' experience in the service. When the significant number of recent recruits to the extended police family are added, the urgent need to provide as much know-how as possible becomes apparent. As offender SSP knowledge grows it provides much needed know-how to the inexperienced. For example, if a list of minor offences that warrant increased perpetrator scrutiny can be given, this would have big implications (e.g. for the application of police resources). The illegal parking in disabled bays study (Chenery et al. 1999) suggests a need for a closer working relationship between police and traffic wardens in order to identify 'wanted' and serious offenders more effectively.
- **SSP trigger offences should be as painless as possible.** An important learning point is that any such indicator offence needs to be both of minimal inconvenience and justifiable to the public. Generally people do not object to obtrusive measures such as being searched at a prison, provided they understand clearly the reasons for it. Offender SSP is about identifying those minor offences which best indicate that more serious offending might be present, whilst remembering that most minor offences will be committed by minor offenders. The best trigger offences will be the least obtrusive, as with the disabled bays study where the illegal parkers were not aware they were the subject of increased interest. Using mobile phones while driving and not wearing seat belts are triggers where advice given to those who are not involved in crime is in any case in the driver's best interests (Townsley and Pease 2003).

- **Justification for SSP must be agreed and accepted.** This links with the above point (SSP trigger offences should be as painless as possible). With regard to public support, communication of the reasons, on a case-by-case basis, is possible and very desirable. The motorist backlash in respect of HO/RT1 non-compliance should be less acute than it would be, for example, in checks on vehicles in disabled bays. This is because the perpetrator has both committed an offence initially, and failed to comply with legal requirements subsequently. Nonetheless, the public acceptance of SSP is almost certainly the largest obstacle to its implementation, alongside the development of the policing skills necessary for the detection of the more serious offending which seems contemporaneous with the failure to produce documentation. The findings of the Hayley Jane Richards inquiry should go some way in reducing such obstacles.
- **SSP as evidence-based.** Lastly, with regard to persuading police at senior levels of the utility of SSP, there is a glimmer of hope, if the SSP is badged as ‘Evidence-Based Policing’, which it should (and must) be. Only thoroughly researched, robust trigger offences should be rolled out into police practice. It, therefore, may not be so much a case of the tune (i.e. SSP), but who sings it that decides whether police perceptions and attitudes change and SSP becomes the universal (but complementary) means by which active, serious offenders are identified.

3 Do Try This at Home: The Ten Commandments of Self-Selection Policing

One of the enduring characteristics of the police service is the impulse to ‘crack on and do it’. The above gloomy reflections will have put all but the most upbeat practitioners off, and indeed until the big issues are resolved the SSP implementer will have all the freedom of someone walking south on a north-bound aircraft. But early adopters hopefully exist and this section seeks to provide our provisional principles which should guide the design of an SSP initiative. For those readers keen to explore the approach further and to develop and test possible trigger offences,

we go on to provide an SSP checklist, along with some suggestions for trigger offences.

Since we acknowledge the prematurity of our ten commandments, why write about them? Implementation failure is the constant threat to innovation. Over the years we have seen many ideas which, if realized properly, would have worked but were discarded after inadequate implementation. We would prefer SSP not to be interred in the graveyard of good ideas prematurely binned. For that reason we venture our ten commandments which should, on the basis of modest experience, shape the implementation of SSP. The reader is reminded of the basic terminology. In what follows, the trigger offence is the minor offence, attention to which can lead to the identification of more serious offenders. Heavy offences are the more serious offences thereby available for detection. There will properly be debate about how to weight seriousness and frequency of offending as elements of 'heavy'. There is a case for saying that if prolific enough, an offender's most serious offence does not have to be very serious to justify identification through an SSP process.

3.1 Commandment 1

Thou shalt not use a person or characteristic as a trigger for action in SSP; the SSP trigger must always be an event. For example, although men are massively more numerous than women in the offending population, gender per se or place of residence must never be a basis on which to target. To go even a little way towards this would be to attract the justified criticism which attends the use of extra-legal factors in policing and criminal justice processing generally. How about targeting offences which are disproportionately committed by men or by women? In this it is events not people which are targeted, but it is disproportionately one or other gender, for example, which in fact ends up targeted. Are offences which are disproportionately committed by one or other gender legitimate in use as SSP offences? For example, is soliciting for the purpose of prostitution a legitimate trigger offence, since it is disproportionately committed by women? Correspondingly is kerb crawling legitimate for use as a trigger offence since it is disproportionately committed by men?

Our provisional view on this point is that offences committed disproportionately by one or other gender *can* legitimately be used as SSP triggers. The sole criterion is an established linkage to heavier and/or prolific concurrent offending. If there is concurrent or downstream active or serious offending it matters little whether the trigger offence is committed by a person with one or other characteristic. The most sensitive personal attribute is race. Swallowing hard, we think that minor offences committed predominantly by those of a particular background (for example the traveller community) is a defensible candidate as a SSP trigger. In short, if those who kerb crawl or neglect animals also commit major fraud, for instance, kerb crawling and animal neglect represent acceptable offences to act as triggers. If soliciting for the purpose of prostitution presages personal violence it is an acceptable trigger offence. The key in all this is that trigger offences should be selected on the basis of the evidence that they anticipate or are concurrent with active, serious offending.

The caveat is that when trigger offences disproportionately committed by people with a particular characteristic are used as trigger offences it should not be the sole trigger offence in use, lest (for example) a *higher* proportion of travellers committing offences at the heavy end are brought to book. In a fair and perfect world all those committing heavy end offences would be brought to book. In an imperfect world striving to be fair, the aim would be for people with similar levels of heavy end offending to have equal chances of being brought to book, irrespective of their personal characteristics.

3.2 Commandment 2

Thou shalt not choose, as trigger offences, offending behaviours which are so minor as not to justify enforcement in their own right. However productive as a trigger offence the dropping of litter might turn out to be, its use would excite public disapprobation. Sentencing directions of the ‘three strikes and you’re out’ variety fail when the third offence (which activates the mandatory sentence) is seen to be trivial. This was dramatically evidenced by the case of the man whose theft of a slice of pepperoni pizza was met by a sentence of 25 years’ imprisonment under the three strikes rule.³

³<http://www.nytimes.com/1995/03/05/us/25-years-for-a-slice-of-pizza.html> (accessed 1 January 2016).

3.3 Commandment 3

Thou shalt choose, as trigger offences, behaviours which are evident by observation rather than investigation, hence are easy for anyone to spot and not dependent on police action. There are two reasons for this. First, SSP is designed to be resource conserving. It has been described earlier in terms of offenders 'volunteering' for attention. This point will be covered in commandment 4. However the primary reason for the present commandment is that all offences which are uncovered by police action are liable to criticism on the basis of police bias. For example, offences of drug possession uncovered by police use of stop and search are problematic as triggers because they require substantial discretionary police action before the offence becomes apparent. Offences which need only to be noticed are much less vulnerable to criticism of police bias. Offences in which the person is not present are particularly suitable. If someone parks illegally in a disabled bay and is not present when the fact is noticed, police cannot reasonably be charged with bias on the basis of, for example, the driver's ethnicity.

3.4 Commandment 4

Thou shalt not commit additional police resources to seeking out SSP trigger offences, though the involvement of other agencies in doing so is likely and desirable (see commandment 7). The resource burden imposed by SSP lies in the investigation and processing of the heavy end offences which come to light. It may indeed be that trigger offences become less policed under an SSP regime because more time is taken processing heavy end offences. Because minor offences are more common than heavy end offences, the danger is that feeling obliged to process officially the minor offences which have been committed, more policing resources would be expended. It is a paradox that the use of trigger offences may lead to them being overlooked more often.

3.5 Commandment 5

Thou shalt choose, as trigger events, ideally those where people targeted who are found not to be seriously or prolifically criminal remain unaware of the targeting. These 'false positives' may well resent their targeting. They should not feel that way, having committed at least the trigger offence, but they may well react with anger. A media storm ensuing. Illegal parking in disabled bays as a trigger event is perfect in this respect. Those who so park and are checked out for other current criminality which is not found are false positives. They need never know about this. If they find out that they have been targeted, parking in disabled bays is such a mean-minded and selfish thing to do that little public sympathy would be forthcoming. This is not least evident from the frequent media stories in which soccer stars are photographed with their flash cars in disabled or loading bays. *Always remember that even the best trigger offence will identify more people who are not serious offenders than people who are, so courtesy, good public information and all the other drivers of public satisfaction should be brought to bear.*

3.6 Commandment 6

Thou shalt investigate after a trigger offence as one would if someone came under suspicion by other routes. Ideally the action should flow as directly as possible from the evidence gathered at the point at which the trigger offence is identified. Again taking the disabled bays example, if the traffic enforcement officer's check reveals that there is an outstanding warrant for the keeper of the car then the action which immediately flows from that is execution of the warrant should the person who returns to the car turn out to be the keeper. Likewise, if checks of the illegally parked car reveal that it has been stolen the enforcement officer should call police officers who will make the appropriate arrest or other action. The position is less clear if, for example, shop theft is the trigger event and domestic burglary the concurrent heavy offence. This may require search of the offender's home for goods taken in burglaries.

3.7 Commandment 7

Thou shalt not be proprietorial as to which agency brings the trigger event to notice. The role of cognitive ‘silos’ in the malfunctioning of companies, agencies and Governments is immense and crucial (Tett 2015), Recognition of this has over the last 40 years in the UK led to the creation of community safety partnerships and similar alliances to reduce silo-bound thinking on crime. This has met with varying but generally limited success. Improving real time communication between police and workers in other agencies in the identification and processing of trigger offence data would be a desirable feature of SSP. One thinks of traffic enforcement officers being able to access police and DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) data which will, for example, establish that a vehicle illegally parked in a disabled bay has a registration number which should properly be on a make of car different to the one parked. One also thinks of strengthened communication between police and Trading Standards officers, it being common knowledge that charging for non-existent building work may reveal a plethora of offending up to and including human trafficking and modern slavery. In the words of the behaviourist mantra, it is easier to act yourself into a new way of thinking than to think yourself into a new way of acting. Community safety collaboration has been attempted from the top down. SSP is a way of building it from the bottom up insofar as people from other agencies are empowered with police information in real time.

3.8 Commandment 8

Thou shalt not neglect cybercrime. The patterns of association between those who commit more serious and less serious offences in cyberspace have not yet been established, still less associations between crimes in cyberspace and ‘meatspace’. As crime migrates into cyberspace this will become ever more important.

3.9 Commandment 9

Thou shalt underpin any SSP initiative with an appropriate evaluative framework. SSP is based upon understanding patterns of cross-type offending by individuals. This is likely to change over time as the relative ease of opportunities for crime change and as (hopefully) people cease to do the minor offences which may lead to non-trivial police action. Such a pattern of changing opportunities is perhaps the most important cause of the crime drop which has occurred across the Western world since the mid-1990s. For this reason a conventional randomized control trial does not provide an adequate evaluative approach. What is needed is an iterative approach in which patterns of cross-type offending within a criminal career are examined. This may and probably should require periodic change in the repertoire of trigger offences brought to bear. This is likely to come from an evaluative approach within the Bayesian tradition.

3.10 Commandment 10

Thou shalt not disengage thy brain. In a force which we choose not to name, a small replication of the disabled bay study was attempted. Cars parked in the disabled bays in front of a fast food outlet were checked. After 25 vehicles were approached, the officer concerned returned to the police station and said that the idea was rubbish. None of the vehicles pointed towards more serious offending. When a little probing occurred, it emerged that in a further seven cases, on seeing the policeman approaching their car, people rushed out of the burger bar and got in their cars and drove off (not to another bay in the car park). The constable did not take a note of the registration numbers of these cars. The commandment not to disengage thy brain is the most important for SSP, in policing and in life. How sad that it is so often broken.

4 And Finally

We finish this book with a few pointers for those readers eager to develop the SSP approach and to test any possible trigger offence ideas which might come to them. We begin with some of the ideas we are hoping to

test in the near future and some for others, much more able than us, to run with, before providing a rudimentary checklist for readers to develop and frame ideas for trigger offences.

4.1 Some Ideas for Possible Self-Selection Policing Trigger Offences

This book is not complete, nor should it be. We never intended it to serve as a definitive resource for SSP; neither as a bible for those contemplating the SSP approach, nor as an ‘idiots guide to...’ for those wanting to test and implement SSP-type initiatives. Although we hope, of course, that it both appeals to and stimulates interest in the reader, it is merely a suggested starting point; we hope that by reading this, others take on this approach to identifying active, serious offenders, and develop it far better than we ever could hope to.

To further stimulate, listed below are a few ideas for possible SSP trigger offences that we have come up with. Of course, this list is not exhaustive, and should be seen more as a ‘starter for ten’ for others to take on the baton.

We begin with some ideas that we are in the process of testing and finish with some that are mere suggestions.

1. *Cruelty to animals*

It is not a seismic leap in thinking to hypothesize that those who are cruel to animals are also more than likely cruel to their fellow humans. Although we are still in the process of testing animal cruelty as a SSP trigger for concurrent, serious offending, preliminary data obtained from a rural police service in England suggest that we might well be right. In the ten year period 2005–2015, 696 people were charged with an offence involving cruelty to animals, in this police service area. Although the possible charges are many, ranging from ‘wilfully killing a badger’ to ‘damaging or destroying a schedule 5 wild animal shelter’, 87 % were charged with ‘causing unnecessary suffering to an animal’, making this the most likely animal cruelty SSP trigger offence in this part of England at least. The next steps of course are first to look at the criminal records

of this cohort of offenders and second to look at the timing of any other offences which they committed in relation to being charged with animal cruelty, SSP being about trigger offences which uncover active, more serious criminality. Although we await the data at this point, we still encourage others to test the animal cruelty/abuse link with other serious, concurrent offending.

2. Planning and executing acts of terrorism

Although access to data is an obvious barrier to substantiation, we speculate that those planning, rehearsing and executing acts of terrorism are likely to commit certain minor offences along the way. At face value, of course, the secrecy which terrorism necessitates makes the idea that terrorists would take any chance at all of drawing attention to themselves while planning their barbarous acts quite absurd. If, however, we take Derek Cornish's 'scripts and scenes' approach to crime, whereby a crime is seen as a series or chain of linked events rather than simply at the point of its commission, and apply it to thinking about terrorism, then identifying SSP-like trigger offences does not seem so absurd.

Roach et al. (2005) give the example of some necessary activities for a terrorist 'car bomb' attack on an iconic building:

- They need to appropriate a car (that can't be traced to them), possibly steal one or rent one by giving false details
- They need to acquire the 'know-how' and materials to make and detonate a bomb
- They need insider knowledge on the security arrangements at the building
- They need to conduct hostile reconnaissance on the building and then do a dummy (practice) run
- They need to plan their escape/exit from the scene of the attack
- They need a strategy to milk the ensuing media attention which does not reveal their identity.

The number of different scenes and scripts involved in the commission of an act of terrorism can be far more multiple than those listed above.

We suggest that a possible SSP trigger in this scenario could be parking a vehicle on a double yellow line outside of an iconic building, when everyone knows full well that if they do so then their vehicle will be removed and impounded (or even blown up). Though a useful security response to note when planning such an attack.

There are, of course, likely to be other trigger offences of more use that we have not thought of but which you might. One of us (JR) likes the thought of bald terrorists drawing attention to themselves by ordering 50 litres of hydrogen peroxide, or terrorism planners who live in high-rise tower blocks ordering 50 tonnes of fertilizer for a window-box, but unfortunately buying large quantities of hydrogen peroxide or fertilizer are not offences in their own right and so are prohibited from being members of the SSP trigger club. Now if they are stolen of course, then that's a different story!

3. Other possible SSP trigger offences worth considering

We end this section with some further ideas for SSP triggers which are worthy of further testing:

- Blue-badge offenders—those that borrow (or steal) the blue parking badge that permits disabled drivers to park in priority-designated parking areas
- Illegal driving in bus lanes—when the rest of us are queuing legally in a traffic jam
- Using a mobile phone while driving—that's with the handset in hand and not using a hands-free system
- Illegal parking in 'disabled' bays and 'parent and child' bays, the latter being a pet hate of the wife of the first author
- Internet 'trolling'.

We encourage the reader to think at this late stage how SSP should also prove useful for the identification of overseas nationals committing serious crime, whose criminal past is obscured by the illegality of their residence in the UK. Similarly, SSP trigger offences should prove equally useful for uncovering those who are committing, or have committed, just the one serious offence, which may or may not be on record.

In a spirit of helpfulness and encouragement we have produced a checklist of questions which need to be asked when considering testing whether a specific minor offence might be a viable SSP trigger, presented in Table 7.1.

4.2 And Finally, Finally, Your Answers on a Postcard Please

We are very interested in your ideas about SSP, be it developing SSP thinking and practice, or suggestions for possible trigger offences, or the implementation of studies and trials, or even how best to evaluate/evidence projects. Please do contact us via j.roach@hud.ac.uk. We hope to develop an SSP website in the near future.

Table 7.1 Self-selection policing: trigger offence trial check list

Offence criteria	Yes	No
Is it an actual offence? (e.g. illegal parking)		
Does it justify enforcement in its own right? (e.g. driving without a seat-belt)		
Is it evident by observation rather than detection? (i.e. can someone committing it be easily seen doing it?)		
Will it take additional resources and if so what and how much? (i.e. does it require more police time, money etc.?)		
Is it unobtrusive to the public? (e.g. will those found committing the offence be blissfully unaware of further background checks being done?)		
Will those identified committing it be investigated? (i.e. can you insure that those committing the offence will be scrutinized by police colleagues?)		
Can the offence also be identified by non-police agencies? (i.e. can traffic wardens, parking attendants and security guards also notice those committing the offence?)		
Is there a firm plan to evaluate this trial or study? If so, how?		
If found to be a successful SSP trigger, will its wider implication be met with resistance? If so, where? (e.g. will a change in thinking or police culture be needed?)		
Do you plan to disseminate your findings widely and if so how? (e.g. articles, conference papers, police professional etc.)		

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